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# PILLARS OF YONKERS

*By*

FRANK L. WALTON

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*1951*

STRATFORD HOUSE

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NEW YORK

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KINGSPORT PRESS, INC., KINGSPORT, TENNESSEE

*Dedicated*

To all those fine and lovable people who have gone on before us, those who developed this community into an outstanding example of a better place in which to live

1386772

new Encyclopedia $3.50 11-16-66 No. 3581 P.O. 2999

# Foreword

NOT always are the big incidents remembered best, for many times it is the small and seemingly unimportant events which make the indelible impressions carried through life. In effect the same thing is true of a community where, at times, a minor incident gives birth to an idea that expands into a sizable working force which in turn has a profound effect on the lives of individuals and the development of the region.

The inspiration for this story stems from an idea, a Kindergarten Circus, which has exerted great influence over a representative community. The purpose of the story is to show the rich heritage of Yonkers and its place in the sun. The medium employed is a community story centered partly in one of Yonkers' communities—one of the several community pillars which form the foundation of the city.

Communities are the very backbone of this great American republic. A community is the level at which friends meet friends, where people understand and appreciate each other's problems. A community is the caldron, as it were, where theories and ideas are boiled down to a mental porridge. For many years this community porridge has satisfyingly fed true Americans with American ideals and American democracy. Local problems discussed over the back fence, at the front gate, or at the warming influence of the fireside are soon settled and seldom become world problems. When neighbor understandingly meets neighbor, the atmosphere soon clears and the whole world seems to move along at a smoother pace. It matters little whether a community is a hamlet, village, town, or section of a city, the important point is to find the level at which people can meet to

resolve mutual problems with due respect to the rights and wishes of others.

It is hoped that while Yonkers is expanding it will build solidly on a basis of real community life. Its future will grow brighter to the degree that its communities become more attractive and better places in which to live. Love of their homes, their surroundings, and their communities will create better citizens, who will take pride in the city as a whole and devote more time to its upbuilding. Forty well-planned, beautifully laid-out communities around centers of attraction closely knit together with over-all planning will build a strong foundation for the city and be far preferable to permitting the city to grow in haphazard fashion into a large dominating city in which the residents merely sleep and work.

This story has been centered in Aquehung, a Yonkers community, in order to stress community life. It is hoped that Yonkers will take time off to peer into the open window of one of its communities and therein behold the desires and ambitions of its several communities. It may discover a greater advantage in developing its strength on these community pillars rather than going it alone with the various communities looking through their windows at an unknown city.

That Yonkers has a great historic past becomes apparent to anyone delving into the facts. Much of its history has been well written, but there yet remains a wealth of material not recorded. One finds it impossible to secure certain data, as many old records have disappeared, while others are not readily available. It is difficult to select usable data, and even more difficult to correlate it. Considerable material of value must necessarily be omitted from this story owing to space limitations. Detailed data about several communities could be recorded, but in many instances the history and the background would merely overlap. In some instances estimates have been used to bring out the points of the story when actual data have not been available. In these circumstances forgiveness is asked for errors of omission or commission in data presented, for, in the final analysis, the theme of the story is the glory of Yonkers.

The purpose of this book will be well served if Yonkersonians become better acquainted with their communities and their city,

and are aroused to a fuller appreciation of the area in which they dwell. It matters not whether one resides in the smallest or the largest apartment, in a house, or on an estate; each person is important to the city, is a vital part of it, and should contribute something of value to it.

We are indebted to many cooperative people for their assistance, for which acknowledgment is gratefully made. Special expressions of appreciation are due William C. Ferguson for his advice in connection with the production and publication of the book, to Thomas V. Kennedy for certain Yonkers data and information, to H. Armour Smith for his help with historical records and early pictures, and to Herbert I. Bennett and Edward A. Bryant for their painstaking editorial work in preparing the manuscript for the printer.

We are also under obligations to several historians for data of importance to the story, for which due credit is hereby given. Such volumes as *Philipse Manor* by Edward Hall, *History of Westchester* by Frederic Shonnard, *Westchester County* by Robert Bolton, *Westchester County* by J. Thomas Scharf, and *Yonkers* by Charles Allison are each and all interesting and instructive and should be generally read.

It is hoped that this volume has been kept within proper perspective and that it will be the means of creating more community spirit, not only at the local community level but at the level of the larger community—the city of Yonkers.

THE AUTHOR

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# Introduction

THIS is a story of Yonkers, New York, which begins back in the Indian era, when the area was called Keskeskeck; follows with the problems of the Dutch era, when it was generally known as Colendonck; deals with the English era, as Philipse Manor; continues with the Colonial and Revolutionary War periods, when it was widely known as The Yonkers; and then covers many phases of Yonkers development in the succeeding years.

It is a community story which emphasizes community life. It stresses the fact that Yonkers is made up of a group of fine communities which are the very foundation of the city.

In the beginning, Indian Keskeskeck developed around the village of Nappeckamack on the Mahicanituck River and the village of Aquehung on the Ahquahung River, both Indian capitals in their day.

In time the white man took over the area and The Yonkers expanded around the small communities of Philipsburgh, Tuckaho Hills, and Mile Square. In the years that followed other communities sprang up, to build a larger and firmer foundation for the city.

It is, therefore, appropriate to center this story in Aquehung for community atmosphere while weaving the story around Yonkers as a whole. In this way it is possible for each community in Yonkers to see itself as such and as an important pillar of the city.

The author has been a resident of Westchester County for thirty years, of Yonkers for eighteen years. He is interested, not only in Yonkers and its history, but in Yonkers as a community and a city.

We believe this story will prove of interest not only to those

who live in Yonkers and Westchester County but to those in every community in the United States where the citizens are interested in developing more community spirit and a better community in which to live.

We are proud to include this carefully researched and highly readable narrative in the nationally popular *American Heritage Series.*

THE PUBLISHER

# I

## Aquehung on the Ahquahung

FORMING the eastern boundary of the great Indian territory of Keskeskeck, later in turn Donck's Colony, Baronial Philipse Manor, and finally Yonkers, is the Ahquahung River, so named by the Indians. According to one interpretation the word means "a high bluff or bank," and another meaning is "a river or stream running along a high bluff." There are several spellings of the name—Aquehung, Ahquehung, Aquahong—all having the same general meaning. Another spelling, Ahquahung or Ah-qua-hung, has an intriguing pronunciation like the exclaiming of "Ah!"—with delight—when viewing the beautiful water hung under the bluff. Other interesting variations obviously need an Indian tongue to pronounce them correctly—Acquehung, Acquehounck, Acqueamounck, and Achqueehgeuom.

The expressive Indian title later was changed by the Dutch to Bronck's River—this after Jonas Bronck, the first white settler in Westchester County, had secured in 1639 title to about five hundred acres in the present Morrisania area. After he settled there Bronck acquired more land, built a gristmill on the Ahquahung, erected a stone residence, barns, barracks, and tobacco house, and became an important figure in the affairs of the early colony. One record gives his name as Brunck, another as Brunk. An old map of the Manor of Philipsburgh lists the stream as Brunks River and Brunk River. The Ahquahung River, Bronck's River, Brunk River, and Bronx River nomenclature has been applied successively to this picturesque stream.

Along the western shore of the historic river there has developed one of the finest communities within the borders of the old Donck's Colony. It is located in an area astride some of the most beautiful hills and valleys in southern Westchester County. Its boundaries are formed by the Bronx River on the east, Cross County Parkway on the south, Central Park Avenue on the west, and Troublesome Brook on the north.

This northern boundary is open to discussion when considering the outlines of the community today. From time immemorial a "community of interest" has centered around the Tuckaho Hills, the reaches of which extend north to Troublesome Brook. This has supplied both a historical background and a reason for establishing the line on the shores of that stream. The area served by the Tuckaho Hills School of manorial days included most of northeast Yonkers and extended beyond the bounds of the present community. School Number Eight's boundaries would place the line near Underhill Street and cut across many historical associations of the past as well as community activities of today. This northern line, imaginary at best, might well be fluid, since there are both past and present associations recognizing no boundaries. However, the line could well be set at the northern reaches of Colonial Heights to present a more coordinated community. Considering this more restricted line, there are within these boundaries the well-known sections of Armour Villa Park, Bronx Manor, Cedar Knolls, Colonial Heights, the Highlands, Lawrence Park West, Longvale, Mohegan Heights, Moorelands, and contiguous developments, including the important apartment area on Bronxville Road and Bronx River Parkway. The locale could well be called "Aquehung," since that Indian title likely originated here.

This modern, progressive community stretching along the west bank of the Bronx River for about two and one-half miles is not far removed from a great metropolitan city, but

is conveniently isolated from the intrusion of traffic by protective woodlands, parks, and winding streets. On the wooded slopes are huge oaks dating back to Indian days, while rocks of granite and other formations deposited here in the glacial age provide both arresting study and useful building material for houses, fences, and rock terraces gracing numerous lovely gardens. Many residents of the area would like to retain its community status, village atmosphere, and pleasant surroundings.

The community, geographically, sometimes puzzles Aquehungians as it does their neighbors and friends. It is a community within the city of Yonkers and, in turn, part of metropolitan New York. For generations Yonkers proper, with its active business district, has developed along the Hudson River on the site of the old Indian village of Nappeckamack, while the Aquehung community, situated over the hills and valleys about four miles away, lies along the eastern boundary of Yonkers on the site of the old Indian village of Aquehung. It is a community on the west bank of the Bronx River closely associated with the villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe, both situated along the east bank. When traveling by train over the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad, which follows the eastern shore, some Aquehungians use the Tuckahoe station, some Bronxville, and others Fleetwood. Visitors to Aquehung are directed to these points if they are to arrive by either train or automobile. It is Yonkers when one is paying taxes, drinking Catskill water, and going to school; it is Bronxville or Tuckahoe when giving a telephone number or a post office address, or using a railroad station or express office. There are other occasions when merely Westchester is mentioned in giving a general direction. Aquehungians seem to know just where they live, even though sometimes it is difficult to explain the locale to others.

Many refer to the community as Bronxville, still thinking in terms of the railroad station used almost daily for com-

muting to New York; but the political and historical past of Aquehung developed as a part of Yonkers. As a matter of fact it is one of the strong and imposing pillars of Yonkers.

Aquehungians are interested in their neighbors to the south in historic Mile Square, even though it was separated from Aquehung in 1670 by a now famous land purchase. Aquehungians, in their daily travels, cross their western community line mainly for contact with Roosevelt High School, located on the border across Central Park Avenue. Aquehungians are closely related to Crestwoodians to the north, not only through social, civic, and church affairs, but through the two communities' having the same historical background which permits them to share in the old traditions both of Tuckaho Hills and Yonkers. Together with Aquehung, these mentioned communities enjoy a common heritage in their situation on the west bank of the Ahquahung; and having a combined community of common interests they can join hands in a Greater Aquehung program when it best serves the welfare of the whole area.

Across the Bronx River, on its east bank, are the villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe and the community[1] of Fleetwood, these enjoying many things in common with Aquehung; and this mutuality of interests increases with daily contacts and close association. The river forms a traditional dividing line; but as time advances it becomes less of a barrier, being almost obliterated as a division line by the daily crossings of it. On both sides of the river a joint pride is felt in the beautiful stream with its history and traditions, which all will endeavor to protect and preserve for posterity.

As a Yonkers community Aquehung is proud to be a part of the larger area with its fine traditions and venerable

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[1] The word "community," strictly speaking, refers to a body of people living in the same place or region; but there is also a restricted meaning which makes the word applicable to the place or region where the people live. The word "community" has been used in both senses with reference to the people and the place, as it seems to represent more clearly than any similar word a locality or section without official boundaries.

past. It is encouraged to think it is doing its share in the building of a greater city.

As the Aquehung community begins another year, it is smoking the "pipe of peace" within its borders and with its neighboring communities. And it will continue to dwell in peace and happiness whether called Yonkers, Bronxville, or Aquehung. One can suit his or her own fancy concerning the designations to be used either in conversation or when giving directions, for nothing can change the fact that it is a choice community in an ideal location, possessing unusual advantages and attractions. The location is not as confusing as it might seem when it is remembered that only a small river and a few hundred feet of land separate Aquehung from the railroad passing through Bronxville, Tuckahoe, and Fleetwood. It is convenient to use those stations for travel, as well as their near-by telephone exchanges, which have been expanded with the growth of the community.

But in order to complete a story a community needs a name—one that can be applied to its particular area, one that may be used without conflict with names of other areas. Without identifying title, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss either the various eras the community has passed through or the old areas it has been a part of. It would be confusing, for example, to use the name of Yonkers, which applies to a much larger area, and even more confusing when it is recalled that at one time there was the village of Yonkers on the Hudson, of which Aquehung was not a part, although both the village of Yonkers and the community of Aquehung were part of the town of Yonkers. It would be necessary to use such references as Yonkers in Yonkers, a Yonkers community in the town of Yonkers, or merely a community within the city of Yonkers. Then again to refer to the community as Bronxville would be not only technically incorrect but even more confusing, since the historical backgrounds of the two communities differ.

Desiring accuracy and believing lucidity will be difficult

to achieve in any event, due to the long-time period to be covered in a brief review, we have adopted a name so that the community can be referred to as an entity in its relation both to Yonkers and other communities. It is seemingly appropriate to select the enchanting old Indian title of "Aquehung," which was the designation of the original Indian village here. And regarding the river, the expressive variation of "Ahquahung" has been used in covering the eras when its original Indian appellation is appropriate.

According to one authority, the true meaning of Aquehung is "a place on the river," while another refers to it as "a river running by a bluff." Frederick Shonnard speaks of the Bronx as the Ahquahung River and of Aquehung as a locality on the river. Whether or not these interpretations of the Indian names are literally correct, they do present an interesting background for a community title and a variation for the river's name, which follows the legend of an Indian village on the river and the setting of Aquehung on the Ahquahung.

The natural beauty of the landscape, the importance of the Ahquahung River, and the fine land bordering on the several smaller streams wending their way through the area provided the real reasons for the Weckquaeskeck Indians settling here. In the surrounding hills and valleys they found everything desired in food, clothing, and climate; also health and happiness which encouraged them to remain hereabouts for generations. It is easy to picture an Indian village on the slopes of the river with its castle or fort atop the high ridge. This elevated strip of ground and its location could well have inspired the Indians to bestow the unusual appellation upon the river.

In Revolutionary War days this ridge, forming the western bank of the Ahquahung River for several miles, became eminent as the redoubt or stronghold of Washington's army during its skirmishes with the British, who then occupied the area east of the river. The ridge evidently formed an impregnable fortress, because the British attempted the unusual

feat of sending their fleet up the Ahquahung River to blast Washington's army out of its fortified heights. There is a legend to the effect that General Howe forced some Americans, familiar with the area of the East River and mouth of the Ahquahung, to pilot the British ships assembled there in an attempt to sail up the shallow stream to attack Washington with big guns. However, the plan failed because the large ships went aground near the river's mouth, costing the British a disastrous operation. This move apparently was made either through ignorance or because the British were purposely misled by the Americans. In those days the river was much larger than at present and a greater barrier than it now appears to have been.

Allison claims that vast quantities of trout and other freshwater fish once abounded in its waters; that it was formerly a stream of some magnitude; that beavers were common denizens of its waters until 1790; that they built many dams, some as long as two hundred to three hundred yards and ten to twelve feet thick. Evidently the waterway was several times its present width, for beavers would naturally place their dams at the narrow points. Small boats can still navigate the stream for three or four miles up from its mouth; but in the Aquehung community, six to eight miles farther north, the Ahquahung possesses many moods, running rapidly through rocky areas and slowing down at woodland bends. Its daily mean flow of water as it passes through Aquehung is about 25,000,000 gallons. Along its course, every mile or two, miniature lakes form lovely idyllic settings, and parks are included for those who enjoy sitting by the shores to imbibe the amiable pastoral atmosphere and ponder the past and future.

In 1798 a plan was considered that might have changed the later history of both this section and other communities located along the river. The city of New York had the river valley surveyed with the idea of using the water for drinking purposes because of the abundant pure supply. The plan

was finally dropped, however, as it was estimated the cost would be a million dollars—a lot of money in those days. But in 1884 the Bronx River headwaters were finally impounded by the Kensico Dam.

The Bronx River has retained its unique charm through the years, and will be preserved as a scenic part of the great Westchester County Park system. The State of New York authorized this in 1907 with the thought of preventing pollution of the streams, and also authorized the construction of a parkway and highway along the river's entire length, with dams set at suitable intervals to form lakes to make the stream navigable for small boats. The highly scenic Bronx River Parkway is the result. The small lakes in each community have added immeasurably to the pleasures of the people along the Parkway; but the larger dams intended for deep-water transportation purposes were never completed, so that the charm of the river in most of its original natural settings has been preserved for posterity.

The Bronx is the longest river in Westchester County. It originates near the county's northern line and flows south through its center, bisecting Westchester almost equally into eastern and western halves. Through the ages this enchanted waterway has played an important role and is more famed than its modest size indicates. Back in prehistoric days it was the watering place and attraction center for wild fauna of the forests surrounding it.

When the Indians settled here, the river became a boundary between tribes because they recognized it as an authoritative established line. Thus the stream became the boundary between the great Weckquaeskeck tribe on its western shore and the important Siwanoy tribe to the east. The Bronx River has been the eastern boundary of the important area between it and the Hudson River through the historical years beginning with the Indian Keskeskeck, the Dutch Patroonship of Colendonck, the English Baronial Philipse Manor, and, finally, after the American Revolution, Yonkers.

Seldom has a stream of like size formed so important a boundary or barrier between tribes, colonies, manors, cities, and villages, or been used through long years as the recognized property line in legal grants, titles, and transfers by so varied ownerships. The center of the river has been a traditional boundary line.

In December, 1948, the directional flow of the historic stream was altered for a short distance to eliminate a curve in its course, between Pondfield Road West and Palmer Road, to create land in the old river bed on which to construct an addition to the Sarah Lawrence Hospital of Bronxville. By the moving of the time-honored river about one hundred yards to the west, the tradition of thousands of years was thus broken. The flow now is through a portion of Yonkers instead of along its boundary and Yonkers now has jurisdiction over about three quarters of an acre of ground on the east side of the river, although somewhat obscured by the Bronx River Parkway. But such is the way of the modern world, which complacently breaks treasured traditions—sometimes regretting it later.

But the man-made change in the river's course, quickly accomplished with the aid of modern machinery with the resultant loss of some beautiful trees, was completed without fanfare or even expressed regrets. December, 1948, will go down in history as the date Yonkers moved across the river—or the river was moved into Yonkers—and the date on which a private hospital accomplished a feat which neither Indian, Dutch, English, Colonial, nor American governments had heretofore been able to match. One even hesitates to record the breaking of a grand old tradition and the rubbing-out of the river's graceful winding curve which made so beautiful a setting in the park. The slow-moving deeper water at this curve had become the home preserve of many wild ducks which played and fed there to the amusement and entertainment of the people. The stream now seems to be uncomfortable in its new artificial bed, as it races through the park

as though anxious to get beyond the Palmer Road bridge to resume its winding course to the sea. The feathered friends must either find a new sanctuary or become accustomed to the quicker pace of the river's flow.

The village of Bronxville, in its mile square area, appears to be bulging at the seams since it pushed the river west and away from its shore where it has nestled from time immemorial. Even the large sand bar uncovered in excavations at this point seemingly could tell a story of prehistoric times when the river was wider and the flow around the bend accumulated the sand over a period of hundreds of years. It may have been a landing place in the Indian world, since canoes could easily have been beached on the sandy shore. It could have been a playground for Indian children and a beach for a real swimming hole.

Aquehung will accept the portion of the Bronx River moved over the boundary line and will make a home for both banks, with the hope that eventually the atmosphere of the stream will resume its peace and quiet and Nature will heal the wounds with a new growth to erase the work of human hands. Perhaps the wild ducks will return to the area and again complete the rustic scene. Neighbors across the river can be forgiven, because the hospital is needed and the site is convenient. They will be joined in their plans, even if with lingering regrets, because the sick and helpless, some of them Aquehungians, will be able to imbibe the river atmosphere, which should assist them to regain their health.

Of more than passing interest is the fact that Jonas Bronck, the first white man to face the Indians on the mainland north of the Harlem River, selected the land along the Ahquahung River for his home. He not only showed rare judgment in his choice of a river on which to locate, but proved to be an enterprising man able to introduce a novel plan for clearing the forests and preparing his land for cultivation. He made an agreement with each tenant that if he cleared the land he could use it for farming purposes for two years free of

rent, after which it reverted to the owner; but the tenant could again clear more land under the same conditions.

But this same Jonas Bronck changed the name of the river both to gratify his own wishes and perpetuate his name. Charles Allison, in his history of Yonkers, says the Ahquahung was referred to as "Bruck's, his river" after he had located on its bank. The Dutch and the English continued to use his name, and finally the Borough of the Bronx, when organized, adopted it in honor of its first settler when the land he had owned became a part of that borough. There are some who still prefer the romantic and expressive Indian name of Ahquahung and would welcome the return of it to the river. The Ahquahung is a Westchester waterway both historically and traditionally. It is also the backbone of the county and the attraction center of many communities along its banks. Aquehungians not only love this old river, but find delight in the atmosphere and charm of Westchester County, with its unsurpassed scenery, fine parkways and waterways, and wide opportunities.

Westchester County was organized in 1683 and enjoys a long, colorful history. The Indians called it "Laaphawachking," "the place of stringing beads." This designation is appropriate because the Ahquahung, interspersed with small lakes along its course, resembles a great necklace around the beautiful Westchester. The clear, rippling stream forms a crystal band, while its miniature lakes resemble pearls sparkling in the sunlight—a bewitching scene when beheld from the historic hills of Aquehung or from the many vantage points along the river's course.

The Westchester County Bronx River Parkway, varying in width from about 100 to around 1000 feet, has invested the river with a parkway of greensward and woodland scenes extending along the full length of the Yonkers eastern boundary of six and a half miles. It forms a protecting cover for the "pearl necklace" of Westchester. From the air the glittering "necklace" appears embedded in verdant turf. To

make easier the enjoyment of the scenic delights, a fine roadway follows the meandering "Route of the Necklace." With the parkway surroundings one might believe this roadway stays within the Yonkers line, which, as previously stated, is the center of the river; but closer observation shows that this highway crosses a small tip of Mount Vernon for about 1000 feet, then cuts across a bend in the river near Fleetwood, passes over a corner of Bronxville, about 900 feet at De Witt Avenue, then crosses Tuckahoe for about 800 feet near Tuckahoe Road, and Eastchester for about 600 feet in the Strathmore section. It is a lovely route through picturesque country along a crystal-clear river.

Aquehungians entertain the friendliest feelings for their neighbors in the Bronx and desire to retain peaceful and harmonious relations with them through the years. It is in order, however, to point out that from time immemorial the Ahquahung River has belonged to Westchester, and that while the name of the river was changed to Bronx, and a portion of Yonkers was set aside in 1874 to form the Borough of the Bronx, Westchester did not transfer its traditional right to claim this river as its very own. In fact, three fourths of its length even now is in Westchester, through which it idles merrily along, sending its rippling Westchester waters through the Borough of the Bronx to empty into the East River and the ocean. It would be quite in keeping with old traditions to rename the river, which should be done now, not only to make it happier, but to clear the records for future generations.

If the residents of the Borough of the Bronx have any objection to this change or to the "Ahquahung" flowing through their borough, it could, if necessary, be diverted over another route to Long Island Sound, and it could then hug the shores of Westchester from its source in Mount Pleasant and New Castle to its outlet in the sea. But the Bronx people would miss its soothing waters, the East River would be less clear, while the New York City populace would

be deprived of the Westchester "atmosphere" the "Ahquahung" brings to Manhattan. However, in a generous mood, Westchester might permit the use of the name "Ahquahung in the Bronx" for that particular portion of the river so long as it continues to flow through the boundaries of the Bronx, but with the proviso that it be treated with proper respect. In any event, in a gesture of friendship, arrangements could perhaps be made to return to the Bronx, for its own exclusive use, the word "Bronx," which has more historical interest there at this time than it has in other places.

It seems doubtful that the recent operations performed on the winding curves and graceful lines of this river in the Bronx Borough, in an attempt to modernize the highway along its route, have had a beneficial effect, or that the engineers have even streamlined according to the river's traditions. Whether it is their fault or that of the Parkway Commission, it would be well for those who change and landscape its shores to keep in mind its ancient Indian heritage and remember that Nature has a way of creating many fascinating rustic scenes too difficult or impossible for humans to copy and that they should be erased grudgingly.

In his poem dedicated to this river, Joseph Rodman Drake, a resident on its banks for many years, included these expressive lines:

> "I sat me down upon a green bank side,
> Skirting the smooth edge of a gentle river,
> Whose waters seemed unwillingly to glide,
> Like parting friends, who linger while they sever.
> Enforced to go, yet seemingly still unready,
> Backward they wind their way in many a wistful eddy."

# 2

## *The Indian Village of Aquehung*

THE Indians were quite a remarkable race, but their language minus an alphabet was difficult for the white settlers to understand. The latter spelled Indian names according to sound; but the Dutch and English languages represented various sounds produced by a different combination of letters, so that written records made at the time show a variety of spellings. The name Weckquaeskeck, for example, was spelled in more than twenty-five different ways, like Wecks, Weckquesicks, Weckquoesgeek, Weckquaeskeck, Wesquecqueck, Wicquaesgeck, and other similar variations. The word, according to some authorities, means "the place of the bark kettle," but Shonnard says "the name is simply a descriptive appellation of the locality where the Indians lived at the date of settlement." In any event, these Indians were the first citizens of the Aquehung community and one can choose the spelling having the most individual appeal.

The Indian race made considerable history, and it is regrettable it did not record its activities so that the ancient civilization could have been intelligently studied and due credit given for its accomplishments. The Indians inhabited this area for many centuries—exactly how long is a matter of conjecture; but it is evident they migrated here at some period after the Ice or Glacial Age. Indian legends refer vaguely to their journey from the west, of the great ice region, of the frigid weather causing many hardships, and of their combats with strange people. Whether these legends refer to other Indian tribes or to different races is unknown.

A guess might be made regarding the birth of the great red race as well as concerning the beginning of the red man's continent. While the American Indian somewhat resembles certain Asiatics, there is no specific evidence that the race originally came from Asia. A glance at the map leads to the belief that in the dim long ago Alaska was joined to Asia. The North Pacific Ocean may have been land—the home of a race preceding the Indians—which disappeared in the sea in an immense upheaval, taking with it a great race and a glorious civilization and leaving only some outlying tribes to develop into the Indian race to carry on traces of an ancient civilization.

Some evidence exists that at one time there was a vast inland sea extending from the present Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean through the Great Salt Lake and the Rocky Mountain region, which could have disappeared in a mountainous upheaval when the other area sank into the Pacific Ocean. The inland sea may at one time have formed the barrier which confined the old civilization to the west and with its disappearance released those outlying tribes to spread farther east to the Atlantic Coast. Such theories are mere conjecture, but the Indian legends tell of their ancestors migrating to the east from the banks of the great waters. Whether the legendary water was the Pacific Ocean, the inland sea, or the present Great Lakes will never be known.

In his trek to the east the red man doubtless left the shores of Lake Erie to seek the rising sun and a new world. He crossed the plains of what is now central New York and finally came to a great river with a wonderful valley. Some tribes found there the land they were seeking and settled there permanently, while others continued east into what is now New England. The important Mohican family or nation adopted the river, soon named it Mahicanituck, and, following a strong urge, built canoes to travel on its waters. Some of the smaller tribes of this family located at intervals on the river shore, but the famed Manhattan and Weck-

quaeskeck tribes, closely related, continued their journey farther south. Finally they came to a place where the river at intervals flowed noticeably south and then north, which puzzled them. In wonderment, they found their crude canoes could travel downstream with ease and a few hours later return upstream with very little effort. After many powwows they decided that the Great Spirit was causing the phenomenon as a sign that they had reached the end of their journey, the center of their new world. Truly, they had found their Paradise. The Weckquaeskecks selected their site, now Dobbs Ferry, built their village of Weckquaeskeck, and settled down. The Manhattan tribe found their place at the confluence of a small, beautiful river, which they named Nepperhan, and the Mahicanituck. Here they built their village of Nappeckamack. In due time the Weckquaeskecks prospered and expanded east to take over the valleys of the rivers they called Armonperahin and Ahquahung, while the Manhattan tribe expanded south along the Mahicanituck.

In the wide eastern area from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean the various tribes possessed general similarities as to costume, folklore, religious concepts, and art. The Algonquin language was spoken from Virginia to the Canadian north.

Allison says:

> "The Algonquin language was agglutinative. Those wild men in the rapid-water-settlement strung words together in an extended compound. They concentrated in a single expression a complex idea or several ideas, among which there was a natural connection. The universal tendency was to express in the same words, not only all that modified or related to the same object or action, but both the action and the object. A learned writer says that, as a rule, Indian geographical terms are of two classes—general or generic, and specific or local. In specific names the combination may be simple, as Coxackie—*co,* object, and *acke,* land; in others, intricate, as Maghaghkemeck, in which *acke,* land, is buried in consonants and qualifying terms. Wa-wa-na-quas-sick is a somewhat lengthy com-

bination. *Wa-wa* is plural or many; *na* signifies good; *quas* is stone or stones; and *ick*, 'a place of stones.' It all means a pile of memorial stones thrown together to mark a place or event. Wa-wa-yaun-da—*wa-wa*, plural, more than one, or we; *yaun*, home, or by the prefixed plural, homes; *da*, town or village; complete, 'our homes or places of dwelling.' "

In prehistoric times, even during the occupation by the red race, wild animals inhabited this area and laid out their routes as they roamed from food to water to shelter. By nature they were constantly on the go, and by instinct they either found the shortest way between such points or followed the easiest route to get there. In general, their paths led along the water routes through valleys and around hills, and they forded streams only when sources of food lay beyond. After many centuries of use some of these paths became wider and assumed the importance of trails.

When the Indians arrived to battle with the animals for land and their existence, they found some trails so well laid out and so useful for their needs that they continued to use them through the years. In the fullness of time some, from lack of use, were eliminated by forest growth and the elements; but certain paths survived when well designed and continued as traffic arteries through various eras in the form of animal paths, moccasin trails, horseback lanes, wagon roads, stagecoach routes, and, finally, as the rubber-speed highways of today.

Some of the old roads actually seem to enjoy restricting the speed of modern motorists as the latter ramble on their way around hills and through dells. With each screech of a brake and hum of a tire the roads appear to issue a warning against the dangerous speed of today. And so it has been through the ages since man left the moccasin trail with an insatiable desire to "get there" faster and with less effort. These veteran roads of Yonkers could, if able to talk, tell hair-raising stories of scalping parties of the 1600's, loss of wigs from jolts in the 1700's and ruffled curls and loss of

dignity in the 1800's when stagecoaches and springless wagons hit ruts and holes with ruthless bumps.

But those stories would deal with people who had somewhere to go instead of with those moderns with restless dispositions in a hurry to "get nowhere." It may be with a feeling of pride and the hope they are serving humanity best that these ancient highways reserve their routes for those living quietly along the way, or who travel the old trails for the sheer love of the scenery, while these sloways force the speedsters to seek new highways designed for fast through traffic. A glance at a map of any community will readily disclose some old route tenaciously holding its place regardless of other well-planned streets. It is merely a question whether it had its birth in the animal world, in the Indian era, or as a country road between farms. It would help solve the increasing traffic problem in Yonkers today if the slowdown tradition of the winding old trails, now some of Yonkers' finest residential streets, were backed up by signs designating them as "sloways" with specified speed limits. This would make these streets safer, and more serene.

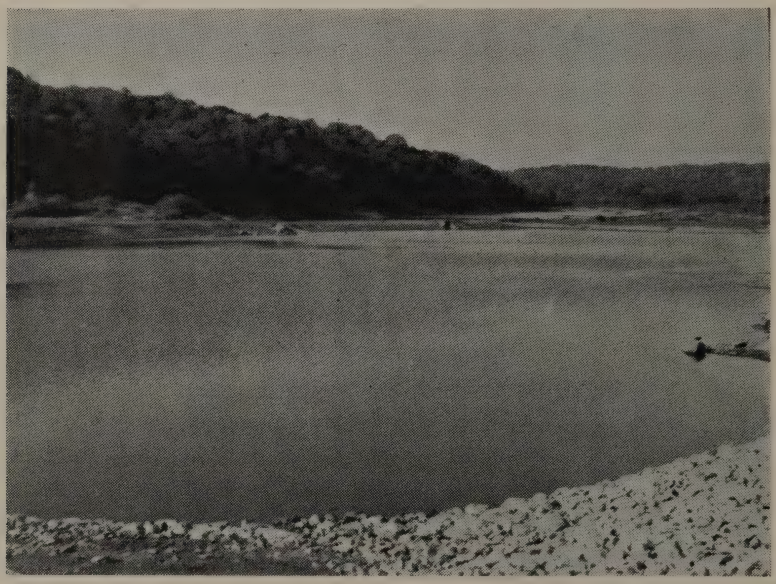
The Aquehung area eventually became a vast hunting ground and fine trapping region for the Weckquaeskecks. Beavers had dammed the small streams, thus forming many beautiful lakes, and those amphibious rodents were numerous; their skins were valuable not only for winter clothing but for trading purposes with other tribes to the east and west. Numerous other fur-bearing animals made their habitats in the surrounding forests. Meat was easily obtained, fish was plentiful, fruit and berries were in season for the picking, and, to complete the setting, there were ample lowlands where maize grew in abundance. Tradition and history show that where there is a center of attraction people will find it and animal trails and roads will eventually lead them to it.

No maps of Aquehung are available showing the many old trails or how the community was laid out in the Indian era;

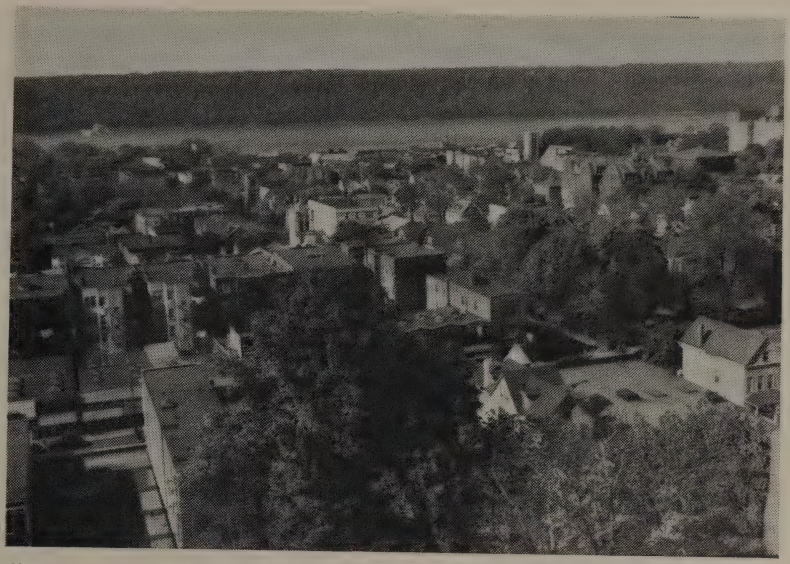
The Bronx River, an important boundary line for hundreds of years. Legend states that a British fleet went aground during the Revolution while trying to navigate its waters.

A lake formed by the Bronx River on the site of the early beaver ponds and of the later pond which supplied water for the old mill near by.

A view of the Tuckaho Hills today, the ancient site of the important Indian village of Aquehung.

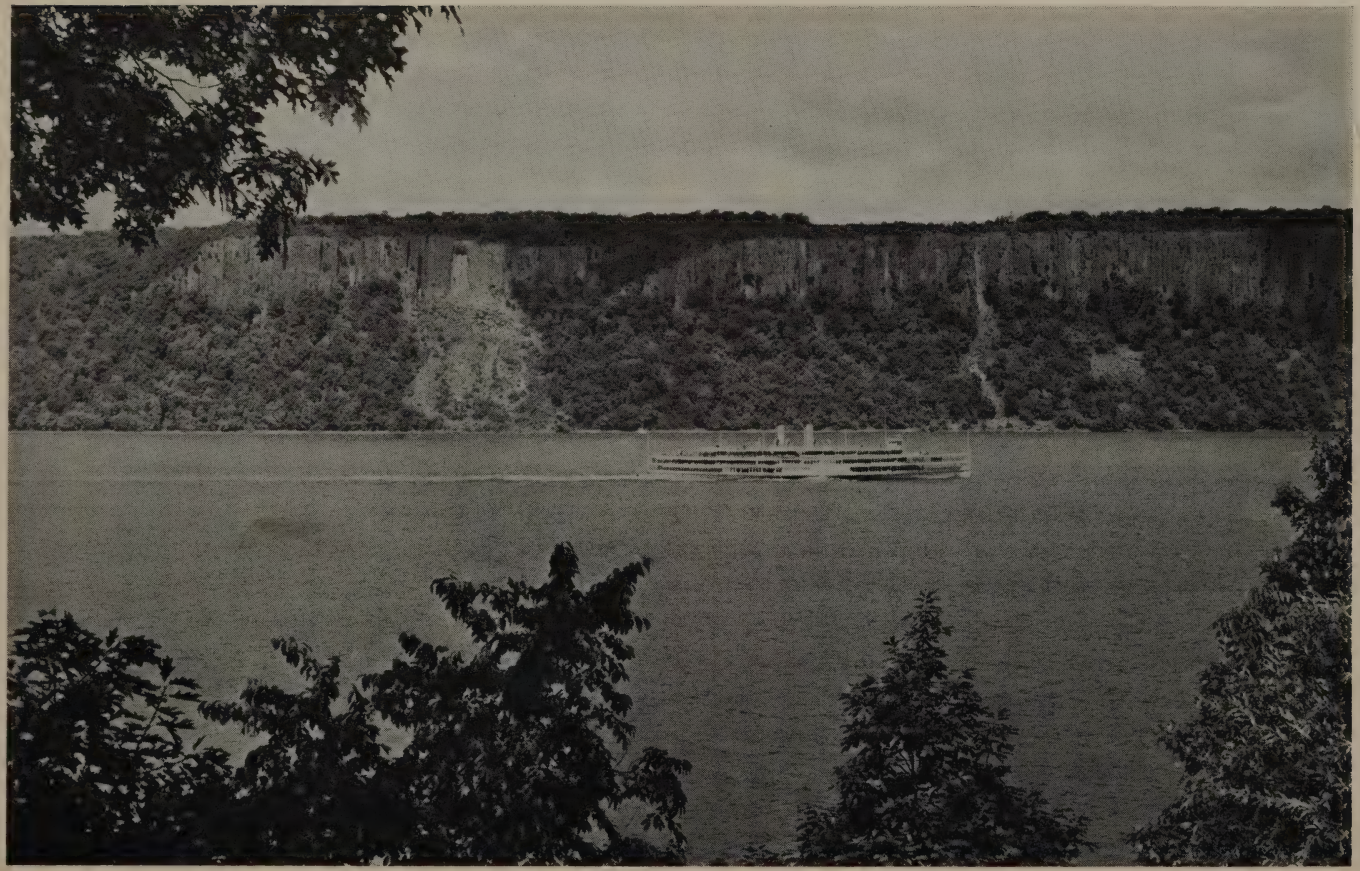


Grassy Sprain Lake—a part of the Yonkers water-supply system and one of the rustic beauty spots of the city.



Panorama of the Hudson and of southwest Yonkers from the high elevation of Sutherland Park, showing a view of part of the old Manhattan Indian territory. The village of Nappeckamack was to the right and Nipinicksen to the left.

A view on the Nepperhan or Saw Mill River. Photograph was taken from the present Odell Avenue bridge, which is on the site of the old Odell bridge of 1785.



The Hudson River and its Palisades. The Indians arrived in the area on this river, and Henry Hudson sailed up the river to discover the Indian village now Yonkers.

so it becomes wholly a matter of surmise regarding the terrain and location of the Indian village here. There is, however, an old map made one hundred and sixty-five years ago showing the roadways and other points of interest in the area in 1785. (See Chapter 7.) Indians were still here when the map was made, and since the roads were not new they must have followed the old Indian trails.

When examining this map one readily concludes that the lowland route of the Sprain River (shown both as Sprane Brook and Trout Brook, but earlier called Armonperahin River by the Indians) was largely water, with beaver dams at intervals along its course to the Ahquahung in Aquehung. One of its early titles, Trout Brook, indicates that at one time it was much larger than now and was a fine fishing region before the dam above cut off a lot of its water supply.

Allison says Armonperahin was the Indian name for the Sprain River, while Armeperahin was that of the West Branch. This signifies that at one time the branch now known as Grassy Sprain Brook or the East Branch originally was the main river Armonperahin.

Bolton states: "The waters of the Sprain were pronounced by the Commissioners in 1842 to be the purest in Westchester County." He also declares:

> "This beautiful stream was long celebrated for its trout. Well may the lover of the sport exclaim with Cotton—
>
> 'None so bright,
> So pleasant to the taste, none to the sight;
> None yield the angler such delight.'
>
> "This fish begins to bite in March or April. Very large-size trout have been caught here about the middle of March and they continue till the months of July and August. They lie, generally, under the shelter of stumps, bridges, and stones. The bait generally used in catching this fish is the common earthworm. By connoisseurs, the artificial fly is preferred."

According to Bolton, the Armonperahin rises in two springs north of Thirty Deer Ridge in the old wolf swamp,

where wolves had their habitat until about 1806. One spring forms the west branch, now Sprain Brook, and the other the east branch, Grassy Sprain Brook. The two springs flow south, soon intersect, and continue south as one stream to the northern extremity of Thirty Deer Ridge, where they separate again and follow two separate valleys. They meet again southeast of Cat Rocks just before crossing under Tuckahoe Road near Grassy Sprain Road. Here is found a most unusual situation, for seldom will streams come together, divide again, follow separate routes for several miles, and come back together again. In time they will become famed as the Siamese Twin Rivers.

Located on the western slope of Thirty Deer Ridge down to the Sprain River Valley is the arboretum of the Boyce Thompson Institute, covering about three hundred acres. It is devoted to experimental work with trees and other woody plants, working in conjunction with the main laboratories on North Broadway in Yonkers. There are about 1600 species laid out in group planting, which furnish the material for experimental work. It is a workshop and a laboratory in a natural setting. It is not open to the public except by permission. It is a fascinating place for those interested in such plants or even in a study of nature in a beautiful location.

At the eastern edge of this ridge is the beautiful Grassy Sprain Lake, formed by the Grassy Sprain River, the storage reservoir for Yonkers' water supply; also a park and a public golf course. During the Revolution our French allies encamped on the upper reaches of this stream in the Greenburgh area. The origin of the name "Sprain" seems to be in doubt, but the old map spells it Sprane and one suggestion is that it is a corruption of the last half of its Indian name. Another point that strengthens the belief that beaver lakes were along this stream is that no trail or road follows its route through the area, whereas it is almost certain an Indian trail would have led west along its shore as a short cut had lakes and marshland not prevented. Modern construction meth-

ods quickly fill the lowlands, bridge the streams, and eliminate curves, whereas in former days it was necessary to trail around them.

Turkey Hoe Rivulet, on the old map, is the small stream that rises about two miles to the north, follows along what is now Central Park Avenue and through the western edge of this community, where it enters Sprain River. In former times it joined its waters with the old Armonperahin to form the lakes in this area.

Sunny Brook originated on Valentine Hill. Flowing northeast, it enters the Aquehung community through the present Lawrence Park Golf Course, which was probably a beaver lake, and empties into Armonperahin River to aid in making a more beautiful waterway in that area.

By an unusual coincidence the Aquehung community is almost surrounded by water. The Bronx River forms the eastern boundary, Turkey Hoe Rivulet is the western boundary for the upper half of the community, while Sunny Brook, although not exactly on the western boundary line of the lower half, is not far from it.

Troublesome Brook almost connects with Turkey Hoe Rivulet, then crosses over to the Bronx River along the Aquehung northern line. On the south a brook has its source not far from Sunny Brook at one point on its course, and flows into the Bronx River just south of the southern boundary of Aquehung. These streams have the effect of making Aquehung an island within the area of Yonkers. As a further coincidence, Sprain River cuts across this island community east and west and divides it into two islands. The northern island, including Armour Villa, Cedar Knolls, Colonial Heights, Longvale, and Mohegan Heights, is almost entirely surrounded by water, the only omission being in the northwest corner, where Turkey Hoe Rivulet and Troublesome Brook do not join.

Many old records refer to beaver dams along the Ahquahung at strategic points, forming several lakes. One record

speaks of a great beaver pond two and a half miles north of the old Hunt's Bridge. If the mileage were figured along the irregular river shore line, or even along the old trail following the river, the pond was about where the present lake is now located, or possibly in the low basin between Pondfield Road West and Palmer Road. The lakes and waterways, fertile valleys, hillside protection, and water transportation on the Ahquahung were contributing factors in making the area a center of attraction. In due time the animal trails were centered here, and later came the Indian trails.

The main Indian trail followed the course of the Ahquahung River (Bronxville Road) north and south. Even a hundred years ago there was a ford across the Ahquahung River where Pondfield Road West now crosses it; so it may have been the route of the Eastern Trail leading from the Aquehung community past the Siwanoy Indian Fort on Sunset Hill, where the Gramatan Hotel is located, and on to Long Island Sound. The Eastern Trail joined the other trails near the intersection of Bronxville Road and Pondfield Road West. Together they formed the great crossroads, Aquehung Junction, an important place on the Indian traffic map. From there the Western Trail led north and west (Bronxville Road to Tuckahoe Road), skirting the beaver lakes on Sprain River and Turkey Hoe Rivulet, and on to the Saw Mill River, where it divided, the left trail going to Nappeckamack on the Hudson, the right following the river north for a half mile. Then it forded it, continued west along a small brook up over the divide (now Odell Avenue) to the old Hudson Trail (now Albany Post Road), and to Weckquaeskeck, the western capital village of the tribe. From Aquehung Junction the Northern Trail led to Underhill Street, then followed the Ahquahung River route (now Scarsdale Road) and on to the Mohican country.

The Southern Trail (Bronxville Road) forded Armonperahin River, followed the Ahquahung River Trail to what

is now Fleetwood, where a Southeastern Trail crossed the Ahquahung River and continued on through the Mount Vernon area, while the Southern Trail followed the river through Mile Square and on to Manhattan Island. At Mile Square a Southwestern Trail turned west to the village of Nappeckamack and the Hudson River.

To visualize a large center of attraction at Aquehung Junction is not difficult, as the area contained a lake region where furs, animals, and food were plentiful; a district, it was, with valleys of rich land yielding bountiful harvests, and a river capacious enough for transportation even to salt water. There is ample evidence of a system of trails leading to and fro in every direction which could have made Aquehung Junction a busy community hub.

Thus the stage was set and, it can be assumed, an important Weckquaeskeck village was close by. History shows that the ideal location selected for an Indian village was near water, suitable for canoe transportation; a southern sloping hillside affording protection against wintry blasts; an adjoining hill, serving as a fort for defense; and conveniently located fertile ground, for planting purposes.

The immediate area around Aquehung Junction seemed to meet every requirement. The river transportation was well-nigh perfect; the Armour Villa Hill was excellent for the fort; the sloping hillside was on the southern exposure facing the river; while planting grounds were numerous in what are now the Longvale and Moorelands sections. Added attractions were the near-by beaver lakes for fishing and trapping and the friendly Siwanoy village across the river.

There is a time-honored legend about an Indian village on one of the Tuckahoe Hills. Bolton says:

> "The northeastern part of this township (Yonkers) is occupied by a high ridge of hills, called Tuckahoe Hills. This portion of the town originally formed a part of that large tract of land between the Saw Mill and the Bronx Rivers, which was ceded by the Indian chiefs—Sepham and others—to Frederick

Philipse, 6/5, 1684. Tradition says that anciently an Indian sachem of that name had his residence on one of these hills and exercised all authority among the tribes of the neighboring valleys."

This reference could also indicate that this Aquehung village was a capital village ruling over other villages in the area. It could have been the eastern capital of the Weckquaeskecks, while the western capital was on the Hudson. Evidently there were smaller villages in the Aquehung area, possibly on the Ahquahung near Crestwood and in the Fleetwood section. Other villages might have been located on the Amonperahin River in the Bryn Mawr section and near the Grassy Sprain Lake.

One might thus conclude the important village of Aquehung and its sachem Sepham ruled all the area between the Bronx River and Saw Mill River, comprising some of the finest lands within the area of the Weckquaeskeck nation. The villages in "the neighboring valleys" probably included those from Strathmore down to Mile Square and over to the Saw Mill River. This would indicate that the Aquehung village might even have been larger and more important than the village of Weckquaeskeck-on-the-Hudson, which may have continued as the principal capital due to tradition and location on the Great River.

References to "Turkey Ho Hills," "Tuckaho Hills," and various designations seem to indicate they were the group of hills now covered by Armour Villa Park, Cedar Knolls, Colonial Heights, and Mohegan Heights. Authorities do not agree on the origin of the name. One of them refers to a group of hills northeast of Nodine Hill, where wild turkeys abounded, and states that "Hoe" means hill—thus Turkey Hoe or Turkey Hills. Allison gives it an Indian background as Tuckah, "the bread, a root which the Indians gathered for food."

Shonnard gives a variable as Pockerhoe and a reference "Hill in Yonkers" and then further explains, "applied to a

species of truffle or subterranean fungus sometimes called Indian Loaf. The Tuckaho of Virginia (Tockwhogh) was the root of the Golden Club. . . . These roots are much the bigness and taste of potatoes."

According to Bolton:

> "The name Tuckahoe means, in the Algonquin language, 'the Bread,' literally, Tuckah (bread)—the o, oe, ong, being merely an objective sign relating to the plant itself."

Thus we have Tuckah, Tuckaho, Tuckahoe, Tuckahong. He refers to Turkey Hoe Rivulet as Tuckahoe Creek, to its valley as "west of Tuckahoe Hills," and declares the valley was famous for "wild turkies."

Bolton observes that the valley also was referred to as "Turkey Hollow," and when a market wagon came down through it the driver would call out "Turkey! hoe!" and that on one of the guideposts near the church, as late as 1854, there could easily be traced the name "Turkeyhoe" painted over with the present name Tuckahoe. John Bowne, who owned the land on which the church was built in 1798, called the place "Turkey-hoe." From these references it seems evident the old Indian name of Tuckah or Tuckaho applied to the hills between Turkey Hoe Rivulet and the Ahquahung River, and from the Armonperahin River on the south to Troublesome Brook on the north; and that in the days of the Indian village the "root" or potato grew in the swampy area of Tuckaho Rivulet and other lowlands in the vicinity. It seems likely that during the English manor era, when the white settlers arrived they saw many wild turkeys, and hearing the words Tuckah, Tuckah Hills, and Tuckaho Hills, corrupted them in daily usage to Turkey-Ho, Turkey Ho Hills, and later to Turkeyhoe, Turkeyhoe Hills, and Tuckahoe Hills. Thus, the Indian nomenclature seems more plausible as the actual beginning of this historical name.

Of interest, however, is the fact that the first transportation route over the old Turkey Hollow Road (now part of Central

Park Avenue) had signposts along the way. It is also interesting to learn that at the Junction, now Underhill Street, the first "conductor" on the line called out "Turkey! hoe!" as if that were the name of the station. One can mentally see him bumping along the old country road through this narrow and beautiful valley with a one-horse springless wagon. Arriving at the signpost "Turkeyhoe" he tightens the reins and lays them down as the horse willingly comes to a stop. He rises from the seat and sings out "Turkey! hoe!" with the accent on Turkey, and a loud, short "ho" as if announcing the end of the line. Those days of primitive transportation and a country community are gone; but this scene could be reenacted someday with dramatic effect and become part of the tradition of the area.

It is quite evident the original Tuckaho, Tuckahoe, Tuckahong, Tuckaho Hills, Turkeyhoe, Turkeyhoe Hills or Tuckahoe Hills was in Yonkers and not across the river.

It is not hard to understand why "Tuckahoe" was selected by the Harlem Railroad as the name of its station located near by across the river, when the line was built in 1844. In the years following, this historical name, through active usage, has been transferred from the hills of Aquehung and Yonkers to the village of Tuckahoe over the river in near-by Eastchester. As a result, the northern half of Aquehung lost its Indian designation of Tuckaho and one section went Colonial, another adopted the Indian Mohegan, another the suburban Armour Villa, while Cedar Knolls glorified the cedar trees on its hill. Tuckaho or Tuckaho Hills would still be an appropriate title for the community if the title had not been eased across the river. Aquehung will retain a priority right to its usage.

To return to the Indian village, it requires little imagination to picture it with long houses, palisaded fort, gaily colored canoes on the lake, glowing campfires, native dancers performing in rhythmic motion, and hundreds of onlookers lining the vantage points. It would be difficult to find a more

natural bowl or setting for the great Indian celebration of Busk than that formed by Armour Villa Hill on one side and Sunset Hill across the river. The sky was the roof, the lake the stage, the grass surrounding it the carpeted floor, while the rocks and boulders were the seats. The show went on in the Aquehung Bowl in all the splendor of the natural setting in full view of the colorful Siwanoy village on the east and the village of Aquehung on the west. It was an imposing panorama, with a matchless setting for a large Indian community where the natives lived in luxury and ease, as measured by their standards, and developed the splendor of their glorious civilization.

In this Eastern Capital, which eventually showed much progress, the Indians built permanent houses, some twenty feet wide and more than five hundred feet long. These were the forerunners of the modern apartment houses now standing on or near the setting. The "Long Houses" were constructed from saplings three or four inches in diameter and probably thirty feet in length, the larger ends of which were embedded in the ground side by side in long rows to form the walls. Those forming opposite walls were bent over until the ends overlapped at the top so that they could be tied together to form the framework for the roof. Small boughs, weeds, and cornstalks were interlaced to weave a lining for the roof and walls. These in turn were carefully covered with bark instead of shingles. Holes were left in the roof to allow smoke to drift out, and since twenty or more families occupied a house, each had a space of about twenty feet square with a fire in the center around which each family slept with feet to the fire. There was very little privacy with a hundred or more persons in one long room, but they evidently liked it or separate houses would have been built. The apartment-house idea really is not new in this vicinity, for it was popular more than three hundred years ago in Aquehung, where the Indians were far ahead of the nomad tribes living under tents in other sections of the country.

Their furnishings were crude, consisting generally of mats of grass and evergreen boughs over which were spread skins and furs. The supply of furs was plentiful, so that there was no difficulty in keeping warm even in the coldest weather. Clothing too was simple, usually being made from dressed skins sometimes colored in beautiful designs. The Indian knowledge of dyes surprised the Europeans, who were unable to duplicate some of them. The women robed themselves with two garments of the same skins, extending below the knees and belted at the waist. They decorated themselves with ornaments of various kinds, sometimes with wampum worth several hundred dollars. The men of Weckquaeskeck usually went bareheaded, their hair shorn like a cockscomb on top. This hand-lock provided an excellent hold for the scalper, and in that respect the early inhabitants of Aquehung were most accommodating.

The food supply of the village was plentiful; the Indians knew how to smoke and dry meat and fish; they boiled beans and corn by putting hot stones in a container of water. Dog meat was a delicacy, particularly for feasts, and their cocktail was a drink prepared from a mixture of mashed hickory nuts, walnuts, and water. Their farming was very simple, for they planted only in rich, easily cultivated loamy soil. They had few tools, using bones and sticks instead for making trenches and holes. They planted tobacco, maize, beans, and pumpkins, the maize or corn comprising their main winter sustenance. The planting grounds in what are now Longvale, Moorelands, Lawrence Park West, Tuckaho Hollow, and other fertile places were ample for all their needs; so they took their time and let Nature do most of the work.

The Weckquaeskecks were adept at taking baths in the flowing streams surrounding the village of Aquehung, including the Ahquahung, the Armonperahin, and sometimes the Tuckaho Rivulet. They bathed to suit their own inclinations; but at least once a year, generally in the late sum-

mer, each Indian would go through the process of cleansing his body and, to some extent, his soul.

The annual Aquehung bath was a ceremonial affair. It required time and careful preparation and aroused eager anticipation. The Aquehung baths were located along the western shore of the Ahquahung River, where choice thickets insured bathers both privacy and protection. A hole or basin about six feet square and a few feet deep was dug near the shore line below the water level of the river. A small trench connected the river water and the basin so that the latter could be supplied when ready and the flow of water cut off with a large stone when filled. A cover of boughs and branches with grass or skins was then placed over the basin to hold in the steam and heat. The first bathtub in Aquehung was thus constructed, and, surprising as it now seems, it would fill automatically. When the basin or tub was ready, a fire was built about ten feet distant from it on the sloping bank above. Small rock boulders one foot in diameter were heated and, when ready, were quickly rolled under the cover into the basin. There the Indian luxuriated in the steam, hot water, and soft warm mud at the bottom. If he enjoyed lolling for hours and dreaming about the hard winter ahead, he arranged with a friend to continue heating the stones, and buried himself on one side of the basin to be in the clear when more hot stones were rolled in. The water again would sizzle and he would near-boil some more. The Aquehung bath was unique and not the routine affair of today. After hours of purging, a rubdown, and a fine polish with oil, the early Aquehungians were ready for another year.

The present authorities would hardly approve of the use of the river's shore line for those famous Aquehung baths; so if one should feel the urge to revive that ancient custom it would have to be in a modern tub. The same pure water is available by pressure flow, but one would have to work much

harder than the Indians to gather the blended mud and volcanic stones. Thus "progress" makes the famous bath not only more difficult but more expensive, maybe as a warning to a tenderfoot to begin in moderation.

Another custom was common and closely followed in the fall of the year by the early Aquehungians, after the first frost. They collected and burned the dry leaves, grasses, and cornstalks, together with any trees that died annually after the bark was stripped off, for use in construction of houses. The smoke hung heavily on the air for weeks, giving to the autumn days the colorful and peaceful atmosphere that has become known as Indian summer. Even today this old leaf-burning custom continues in Aquehung, to the enjoyment of present Aquehungians.

It is arresting to contemplate that some of the noble old white-oak trees yet standing in Aquehung have spanned the long interval from Indian days down to the present time, and that their leaves were burned by the ancient Indians as they now are by Aquehungians of the present era.

Thus a picture is presented of the old Indian village of Aquehung, the Eastern Capital of the Weckquaeskeck Indians. It is unfortunate that more is not known of this great village and of the glorious civilization of its day. Its location on the eastern slope of the Tuckahoe Hills, extending down to the shore of the Ahquahung River, was ideal in many respects. Its fort or castle on the crest of the hills was an impregnable fortress, as were the fortified redoubts atop the same hills during the Revolution. This Eastern Capital was a power in the Indian world, a center of attraction for unknown centuries when the red man ruled this continent. Eventually excavations may reveal its exact location and some of its details, including the burying ground situated, no doubt, not far away.

# 3

# *Nappeckamack on the River of the Mountains*

WHEN the Manhattan Indians built their capital village of Nappeckamack, they selected what to them was the choicest site along the full length of the Hudson River. It was easily accessible not only to the great river but to the smaller river which offered a harbor for their canoes. They found fish and food plentiful. The setting was magnificent, the mountainous views inspiring. The sun entranced them as it dropped quickly out of sight behind the Palisades. Truly, their god had blessed them. Moon after moon passed over the Palisades, and the Manhattans prospered and expanded in numbers under these ideal conditions. Their lands, which extended east to the banks of the Nepperhaen [1] (Saw Mill River) and the Mosholu (Tibbett's Brook), later expanded south to the Muscoota River (Harlem), and finally included the great island they called Manhattan. The latter eventually became the Manhattans' great summer resort for fishing and hunting.

By the time Henry Hudson arrived, the Indian summer capital of Manahatta, on the shore of Collect Pond, the great fresh-water lake in what is now the City Hall area of Manhattan Island, had become an important village and an all-year habitat. The Manhattans had become an important tribe in a strategic area and for protection had built a strong

[1] Also spelled Nepperhan, Napperhaem, and Neperhaen.

fortified castle or fort on the high point at the confluence of Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Mahicanituck, which they named Nipinicksen.

The Manhattans and the Weckquaeskecks, being closely related, seemed unconcerned about an actual boundary line between them, although it appears to have been the general line formed by the Nepperhaen and the Mosholu. In fact, in dealing with the Dutch, the descriptions they gave of Keskeskeck and Nepperhaen seem to overlap. It seems proper, therefore, to use Keskeskeck as the name for the Indian area which is now Yonkers.

The discovery of a new world is a momentous occasion, arousing intense excitement at the time and affording the discoverer much satisfaction as a recompense for dangers and hardships suffered in the performance of exploratory deeds. Perhaps no individual has profited to any extent in a material way from such a feat, as the human life span is too short and the development of the discovery too slow for a person to reap much benefit. However, his name goes down in history for an outstanding accomplishment and, in due time, his country and compatriots are benefited.

Equally epochal in human history is the discovery of a new race, surprising not only to the race involved in the making of the discovery but to the one discovered. Glancing back through history, some might even debate the question as to which was the actual discoverer when the races first met face to face; but history seems to settle the question in favor of the race that sought out the home of the other. Only a few humans in the world's history have been privileged to play roles in such historical events, and it is doubtful whether, at the time, the participants could have realized the magnitude of the results of their acts to future generations.

On September 14, 1609, Henry Hudson, after sailing down the Atlantic coast, entered the river now named for him, but which he called the River of the Mountains. He found it was a great body of water providing a haven of peace after

his strenuous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in his small ship the *Half Moon,* and an inspiring sight with its rugged mountain scenery and high Palisades. Hudson was discovering a new world centering around the Hudson River and its magnificent valley. Henry Hudson is to Yonkers what Christopher Columbus is to America.

While nearly a century earlier, according to legend, Verrazano, an Italian navigator in the service of France, had traversed the waters near New York harbor and named the river Grandissima Riviera, and Gomez, a navigator for Magellan, had early visited the area, yet no attempt was made to explore further or take possession. Hudson appears to have been the first person to visit the old Indian village of Nappeckamack. While he may have heard of or even seen American Indians on the voyage down the Atlantic coast, it seems possible his trip into the Hudson area brought his first real contact with the red race; and he was the first white man seen by the Indians of Yonkers. As the celebrated navigator sailed up the river, he was astonished to find a village at the mouths of nearly all the smaller streams flowing into it. On what is now Manhattan Island, where Minette Brook enters the Hudson, was the Indian village of Sappokanican. Near the mouth of Spuyten Duyvil Creek, on the hill, was the fortified Indian village of Nipinicksen. About four miles farther north, at the mouth of the Nepperhaen, was the village of Nappeckamack (Yonkers). About five miles farther north, at the influx of the Wysquaqua, was the village of Weckquaeskeck (Dobbs Ferry).

While Henry Hudson was amazed to behold the inhabitants of these villages, they, in turn, were equally astounded to see his large, bird-like craft with great white wings moving silently through the water. They were also amazed to see on board the "Pale Faces," their wonderment increasing as they discovered the differences, not only in color and characteristics, but in dress, habits, and customs. The Indians were prepared, however, to accept these newcomers as

friends and made ready to exchange gifts and peace offerings according to their custom in greeting strangers.

But the friendly-welcome plans were suddenly changed when two Indian captives, taken prisoners off Manhattan Island, escaped from the *Half Moon* near Spuyten Duyvil and, circulating many tales about the visitors, aroused the warriors to seek revenge for their alleged mistreatment. According to report, the two venturesome Indians had paddled out to the *Half Moon* while it was opposite Manhattan. The ship's crew induced them to come aboard and held them prisoners more as a matter of curiosity than with any intention of harming them. However, the Indians evidently felt abused because held against their will; so they reported ill treatment and urged retaliation. A lot of excitement was stirred up in the Indian capital of Nappeckamack, and still more in its fortified village of Nipinicksen near by, where feverish preparations were begun to uphold the honor of the red race and attack the white-winged bird if it returned.

Word spread rapidly to the interior area, to the Weckquaeskecks and their eastern capital, Aquehung, not only from Nappeckamack but later from their western capital on the Hudson as the big bird approached there. The surprise and consternation of these villagers can be imagined when they saw the seeming great bird "swimming" in the river under control of a white race of whose existence, until this time, they had been completely ignorant. Some of the inhabitants of Aquehung, having heard many fantastic tales, doubtlessly assembled on the high bank of the Ahquahung to see if a big bird was coming up their river. The Indians probably were torn between a curious desire to see the new race and its great bird, and a fear of what might happen to them if they did. Many decided to remain close to the Ahquahung, feeling some degree of safety in the great distance lying between them and the Mahicanituck, while some of the more venturesome hurried over the Western Trail in an effort to arrive at their western capital in time to witness

the expected startling event. As the visitors sailed up the river, the Indians were left in bewilderment to ponder over a new page in their history.

It certainly was a momentous occasion, arousing warm discussion. Some of the wiser ones may even have suggested that the great bird might cross over from the Mahicanituck to the upper sources of the Ahquahung and, in due time, float down their river to descend on their village. They likely spent feverish days strengthening the palisaded fence around their fort and wondering if this creature could climb their hill and step over the high pickets. The natives collected many large boulders to be rolled down the slope if the giant foe appeared. They then began to realize how inadequate their defenses might be, which, until then, were planned to cope with their known enemies; and strategy boards held powwows lasting into the early morning, during which there were many uneasy moments, relieved only when it was finally learned that the big bird was swimming down the Mahicanituck.

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In the meantime the *Half Moon's* navigators, having found no outlet up the Hudson, decided to return, and on October 2 the ship passed Nappeckamack, whence word was sent by speedy messengers to Nipinicksen. The Indians, being ready, attacked it off Spuyten Duyvil Creek. After a furious bloody battle they suffered heavy losses, thus receiving their first reverse at the hands of the white man. This historic engagement may have been the first naval battle fought in the New World.

It is not difficult to picture a fleet of gaily colored canoes manned by Indian warriors in full war paint and regalia, paddles flashing in the sun, bows bent, and arrows pointed ready to be released when the "bird" was surrounded. The red men were excited and eager for the "kill," feeling confidence in their numbers, marksmanship, and skill. They had dogged big animals before—buffalo, bear, and deer. They knew how to surround them, torment them with arrows shot

from many directions, and how to keep out of their way. The Indians were experts at hit-and-run fighting, which would continue until their quarry was exhausted; then they would move in for the "kill."

However, here was something new, a bird bigger than anything they had ever before tackled, which in some mysterious way was manned and operated by strange people. Instinct warned them it was time to exercise caution, for they might be dealing with the Evil Spirit; but the vengeance urge was even stronger, it being in accordance with their tradition to avenge a wrong. So, throwing caution aside, they began the attack. Their surprise and confusion can be surmised when the great bird, with thunderous noise, spat smoke and invisible bullets that spread death and havoc in their ranks. The supernatural had happened, the Evil Spirit had spoken. The engagement was of short duration. In a panic the survivors swam hurriedly for the shore and safety of land.

The Indian inhabitants of Aquehung were especially interested in Hudson's discovery of the village of Weckquaeskeck, their western capital settlement and first contact with the white race. They also were interested in the discovery of Nappeckamack, the principal village of the Manhattans, a related tribe, around which site has grown up the important city of Yonkers.

As far back as Indian legends extend, the villages of Aquehung and Nappeckamack have been associated, first as a part of Indian Keskeskeck and later as communities within Donck's Colony, Philipse Manor, and Yonkers. One village was on the eastern border along the Ahquahung River, while the other lay on the western border along the Mahicanituck. In that period of slow and difficult travel the villages were many footsore miles apart over rocky hills, across valleys, and through forests; but as time passed each grew and expanded toward the other until today they are joined within one city boundary, although still retaining their old atmosphere and traditions.

When Henry Hudson opened the doors to this new world, he found the red men living in their own Paradise world and a law unto themselves. For easy living, food, and transportation facilities many of their villages were located along the great river, while others were on the smaller streams.

Because of the importance of Mahicanituck, one is inclined to overlook the beautiful Nepperhan River flowing into it at the village of Nappeckamack. This stream was history-making, particularly during the Indian era, as the site of the first attempt by the Indians at industrial development, the forerunner of the fishing industry in this country. Not only did that industry have its beginning there, but the production of fish nets and traps became of prime importance in the village. So large was the fish supply, that it encouraged the Indians to build better and more efficient traps and nets to increase their catch.

According to some authorities, Nepperhan is a corruption of Nappeckamack and has been erroneously translated as meaning "rapid-water settlement." Another authority, William Tooker, says it means "trap fishing place," evidently because the Indians placed traps or nets there at high tide to catch the fish on the ebb tide. This fishing place became famous in the Indian world, its importance having been heralded from Indian to Indian and village to village as the locality where thousands of fish could be caught with very little effort. It was quite natural for an important Indian village to develop where food was abundant, the valleys were fertile, and the hills not only beautiful but a protective barrier against attack. It was an ideal setting for an Indian village. Across the great river were the titanic Palisades, five hundred feet high, forming an almost perpendicular rocky wall—a nature wonder. The wide expanse of water was subject to varied colors created by the reflections of sun, sky, and cliffs.

In due time, following the discovery of the Hudson River, the Dutch and English realized that Henry Hudson had

found not only one of the mightiest of the world's rivers but also an area replete with wonderful possibilities. For sheer grandeur and majesty of scenery this inland waterway is unsurpassed. High rock-bound shores beautifully landscaped with shrubs and trees, plus numerous solid rock exposures, produce a vast panorama of rugged heights crowned by a mantle of green. The mile-wide expanse of clear water, fed by thousands of springs in the river's upper reaches, together with added rains and snows, forms a huge natural mirror which reflects the glorious spectra hues of the rainbow as the moving sun creates a kaleidoscopic effect of changing color and scenery. One can stand on the high shores of the Hudson and enjoy this enchanting American scene. It is not surprising that the Indians called it the Great River, and Henry Hudson, the explorer, referred to it as the River of the Mountains.

From early days the Hudson River has been a haven for ships of all nations. They look like tiny models resting on the sheen water within the boundaries of high walls. The great United States Navy has, from time to time, anchored in the quiet stillness of the Hudson between Yonkers and New York City without disturbing or crowding other shipping. The battle fleets of the world could easily do likewise in this huge stream. Small wonder it is that when commercial interests in the long ago discussed a plan to wreck the magnificent rock-faced Palisades, a hue and cry went up to save them. Prompt action effectively stopped the operation then—and, it is to be hoped, forever. To blast down those rock walls to obtain millions of tons of stone for construction material would be wanton desecration beyond repair.

This wonderful river, after millions of years of peaceful existence while digging its great gorge, has been disturbed in recent years by the blasting of tunnels deep below its bed by human beings desiring to tap Catskill water for New York City. But it continues to flow along quietly amidst scenery of unsurpassed splendor. Every effort should be made to

preserve this rare natural setting and protect the river's shores against both unsightly structures and pollution of its water.

The Hudson River drains an area of over 13,400 square miles. Its average water flow is about 15,000,000,000 gallons in a twenty-four-hour day—an immense amount of fresh water. That is ten times the amount required for New York City, Westchester County, and a fifty-mile surrounding area. This vast run of fresh water merges in New York Bay with salt water from the Atlantic Ocean, but a portion of it in the bay also passes back into the Hudson with the flood tides. The average volume during each total cycle of 12.5 hours passing from the Upper Bay into the Hudson is five and three-quarter billion cubic feet, or about 43,000,000,000 gallons during flood, while during the ebb the Hudson discharges into the bay six and three-quarter billion cubic feet, or about 50,500,000,000 gallons. That is an enormous volume of water to move to and fro without noticeable activity. The river is tidal as far up as Troy, one hundred and fifty miles from its mouth, but salt water reaches about to Poughkeepsie.

The floor of the great gorge which forms the Hudson is below sea level from its mouth for sixty miles upstream beyond Newburgh—in places five hundred to one thousand feet. It thus forms an estuary where the fresh water is subject to displacement from the salt water of the ocean tides.

The source of the Hudson is high up in the Adirondack Mountains near Mount Marcy, 4326 feet above sea level, where small lakes feed it. Its broadest point is Tappan Bay, just above Yonkers. This bay is about four and one half miles wide and thirteen miles long. The river is renowned for the beautiful mountainous scenery along its three hundred and fifty-mile course.

The Hudson River has had many names in the past, some bestowed out of awe and respect, others to perpetuate titles in native lands. Whether it bore Indian, Spanish,

Dutch, or English titles, the river invariably made a deep impression on its discoverers, just as it does today on those who first view it with its elevated Palisades. The Mohicans called it Mahicanituck; the Iroquois, Ca-ho-ha-te-a; and other Indians along its course, Shatemuc.

Other appellations given the Hudson through the ages, according to records, maps, or designations, are as follows, probably in the order they were used:

Una Grandissima Riviera (Verrazano, 1524)
Rio Grande, Riviere Grande, and Grand River
Rio de San Antonio or River of Saint Anthony (Gomez, 1525)
Rio de Gamas (Spaniards, 1525–1600)
River of the Mountains (Hudson, 1609)
Montaigne Rivier (Dutch maps, 1615–1664)
Hudson's River (Dutch Publication, 1612)
River Manhattes (De Laet, 1625)
Manhattans Rivier (Dutch maps, 1615–1664)
River Mauritius or Maurits Rivier (Dutch Period)
Noort Rivier (Dutch Period)
North River (English)

Following his naval battle with the Indians at Nappeckamack, Henry Hudson had more respect for the red race. In his first contacts he had found them awed and bewildered, appearing to be a meek aboriginal people, poorly equipped and ignorant of the world and human civilization. He learned, however, that when aroused they were brave fighters even against heavy odds and ready to defend their homes and shore. Hudson evidently decided it would be foolhardy to make war against them with his small crew; so, after his first engagement, he set sail for home in the *Half Moon.*

Henry Hudson was an Englishman, a fine sailor, and a great explorer. He left to posterity his discovery of the Hudson River and the old Indian villages of Nappeckamack and Weckquaeskeck.

It is significant that even before being harassed or hampered by white men, the Indians of the Mohican family covering the area now Westchester County were banded together in the Wappinger Confederacy as a protection against the Mohawks and other tribes to the north, who were constantly giving them trouble. Nine tribes were in this confederacy, including the Manhattans, the Weckquaeskecks, and the Siwanoys, while the other six were in the area now comprising the northern portion of Westchester County.

Thus it is seen that in the Indian world their civilization was built on a foundation similar to our own. It had its basis in the rights of individuals with the freedom they loved, in the family life they cherished, in tribal control that permitted them to dwell in pleasant association with friends and neighbors, in a confederacy of tribes to maintain peace between them and to promote the welfare of all.

It might be asked how much influence this ancient Indian civilization exercised on our Founding Fathers when drawing up the plans for the Confederation of the original thirteen states. As far as the rights of individuals were concerned, the Indian civilization, while crude in its application, had as its basis a freedom and democracy far in advance of that of the Dutch who first projected an all-powerful, one-man dictatorship over Donck's Colony; and also in advance of the English who set up an almost equally autocratic control. Yonkers returned to a democratic form of government only after the American Revolution wrested control from the British and returned it to the people.

# 4

## Colendonck, or the Old Donck's Colony

A NEW ERA was approaching, an era when the red race would have the white race as neighbors; an era when the white man would be seeking new lands and a better place to dwell in while the red man owned the land and desired to live there in peace; an era when these races with divergent views would be vying with each other for control of this paradise world. In this dawning era the red man had more land than he needed. Land was not valuable to him, because he knew there were great forests farther back. The white man had beads, trinkets, tools, guns, and even firewater, which interested the red man more than furs he could easily secure. So, for a time, red man and white man bartered and traded in a limited way, having very little contact with each other.

In 1626 the Dutch bought Manhattan Island from the Indians for a few beads and trinkets, and more white men began to arrive as the West India Company increased its campaign to colonize the area and develop more trade. Eventually the bartering became more difficult. The influx of more settlers disturbed the Indians, and they began to demand firearms in trade, which they found valuable not only for hunting but for warfare. The Dutch authorities, however, hesitated to equip them and soon took steps to slow down the arms traffic. The refusal to barter these desired items led to more difficulties, and it was not long before serious friction developed between peoples of two totally different worlds.

Finally, on August 31, 1639, three chiefs of the Weckquaeskecks—namely, Fequemac, Rechgawae, and Packanniens—claiming ownership of Keskeskeck, appeared at Fort Amsterdam and in return for beads, trinkets, and other items conveyed to the Dutch West India Company the tract of land in their territory called Napperhaem, embracing the site of the present city of Yonkers.

Having sold the land and received their pay, the chiefs made no formal effort to transfer it and at that time the Dutch made no effort to take possession. The Indians continued in possession as if no sale had been made, and perhaps the three chiefs made no disclosure of the transaction to the members of their tribes or divided the spoils with them. So the transfer was not effective, as subsequent owners discovered, when it became necessary to acquire title by purchase directly from the Indians in possession at the time.

According to Shonnard, Chief Tackarew was the grand sachem of the Weckquaeskeck tribe and was seated at the village of Weckquaeskeck (Dobbs Ferry) when the three chiefs made the deal for Keskeskeck. There were other grand sachems of this tribe of historic interest, for they sold and granted lands to the white men in different periods. They were:

1649—Ponupahowhelbshelen
1660—Ackhough
1663—Souwenaro
1680—Weskora
1681—Wessickenaiaw

Their names are unusual. By comparison, that of Sachem Sepham of Aquehung is rather mild and more in consonance with the peaceful community of Aquehung.

Some settlers attempted to move across Spuyten Duyvil into Keskeskeck in 1640, but hostilities developed and they returned to Manhattan. After that experience no new settlers were sufficiently courageous to build a home in the expansive woodland country fifteen to twenty miles from Fort Amsterdam until peace could be made with the red men there.

In 1642 the Dutch, with a small force, moved into Keskeskeck to demand that the Indian murderer of Claes Smits, killed on Manhattan, be surrendered, the Weckquaeskecks having refused to give him up. This crime was the result of the Indians' code of a life for a life. The Indian assassin, then a boy of twelve, was accompanying his uncle from Keskeskeck to Manhattan to sell the latter's furs. While in the present City Hall area, he saw his uncle murdered and robbed by three servants in the employ of Director-General Kieft. The lad returned home to bide his time until he became of age, when he would avenge his uncle's fate. The murder of the Indian on Manhattan in 1626 and the young Indian's revenge in 1641 were responsible for a memorable page written into the history of the New World. The wars that followed almost ended the colony and might have changed the history of this nation. The records do not disclose whether this Indian and his uncle hailed from Aquehung or some near-by village, but they could have moved in canoes down the Ahquahung from that village into the East River, thence down to Corlears Hook, from where the Indian trail they were traversing led to Collect Pond near the present City Hall, the scene of the homicide.

These incidents, however, brought into focus the differences in the racial points of view. Negro servants of the Dutch governor, for example, murdered an Indian for plunder, going unpunished by the Dutch, and later an Indian killed a Dutchman in cold blood to avenge the earlier deed. The Indian code permitted the nearest of kin to avenge the murder of a member of the family, and if he could not find the actual criminal he could take revenge on another member of the tribe or race. Historically this Indian assassin became famous because of the serious consequences following his act. He was a hero to his tribe and was given full protection. The immediate effect of his deed was the sending by the Dutch of the inglorious expedition into Keskeskeck to enforce their earlier demands for his surrender.

Historians are in general agreement on the facts up to this point. But they are uncertain about the home or village of the Weckquaeskeck Indian and lack accord regarding the destination of this military expedition. Some merely pass over these two important facts without comment, as if it were unimportant to their story, while others are vague. There is considerable confusion because some historians take it for granted that the military expedition was ordered to the Weckquaeskeck village at Dobbs Ferry evidently because it was the capital village. However, they seem to lack supporting evidence. Several historians ignore the village question entirely, merely stating that the Indian was from Keskeskeck across the Muscoota (Harlem) River, indicating that he was from southern Westchester and not from the Dobbs Ferry area. These historians have overlooked the possibility that the important Indian village of Aquehung was the most likely home of the Indian in question and that there is an accumulation of evidence pointing to it as the destination of the military expedition. It is important, however, to a story of Aquehung and Yonkers to clear up these records, especially if this Indian was one of their early inhabitants.

Bolton and Allison say the Dutch expedition moved across the Harlem (Muscoota) into Keskeskeck; thus they agree with others that it was a land expedition that moved into the interior of Westchester. Allison in his *History of Yonkers* says:

> "In 1641 an old wheelwright was killed by the nephew of the Indian whom the Negroes murdered. Kieft sent at once to the chief of the Weckquaesgeck tribe to demand satisfaction. The latter refused to give up the criminal on the ground that he was but an avenger after the manner of his race.
>
> "A party of 80 soldiers was dispatched against the Weckquaeskecks with orders to exterminate them by fire and sword. The guide professed to know the way to the Indian village, but he lost the track just at nightfall. The night was clouded and dark and when the expedition reached Armeperahin (west

branch of the Sprain River, which flows in the rear of Dobbs Ferry), Van Dyck, the ensign, called a halt, notwithstanding the entreaties of his men to push on ere the savages should have warning of their approach. An hour and a half was thus lost. The guide then missed his way. Thereupon Van Dyck lost temper and made a retrograde movement to Fort Amsterdam, whither he returned without having accomplished the object for which he had been detailed."

Allison then states that "perhaps" the Indian was from Weckquaeskeck, the principal Indian village at Dobbs Ferry on the Hudson River. Shonnard reports that war was declared by Kieft against the Weckquaeskecks in the spring of 1642 and that

"Hendrick Van Dyck, an ensign in the company's service, was placed in command of 80 men, with instructions to proceed against the Weckquaeskecks and execute summary vengeance upon that tribe with fire and sword. This party crossed into our county (Westchester) and, under the direction of a guide supposed to be experienced and trustworthy, marched through the woods with the intent of attacking the Indian village which then occupied the site of Dobbs Ferry. But they lost their way and were obliged to come ingloriously back."

However, Kieft, according to Shonnard, a few months later ordered an expedition of 120 men to Greenwich, not much farther, and sent them by boat. This was evidently to avoid the burdensome overland march and the dangers of ambuscade along the woodland routes. Having ordered one expedition sent by boats to a place that could be reached by water, it seems unlikely that Kieft, only a few months earlier, would have ordered a long and burdensome overland trip to Dobbs Ferry on the river. On the other hand, a military force could not have gone by ship to Aquehung; so, had it been ordered there it would have had to march overland. Since they actually traveled overland, passing through what is now the Bronx and lower Yonkers, to reach the Armeperahin River, it would seem to prove they were seeking an Indian village other than Dobbs Ferry. It appears to be

conclusive that this expedition traveled over an Indian trail from the Harlem River to Mile Square, and over the trail now Mile Square Road until it reached the Armeperahin River at its bend where this road joins Tuckahoe Road, the old Indian trail to Aquehung. This may be the point where they lost their way—not at all surprising, since it was a rugged area traversed by narrow Indian trails and known as the wildcat country.

At this junction the expedition was only a few hundred yards from the point where the Armeperahin River flows into the Armonperahin River, and about a mile from the Indian village of Aquehung situated due east at the junction of the Armonperahin and Ahquahung Rivers. The fear of being detected doubtlessly stemmed from the knowledge that they were near the village they sought, known to them to be located on these rivers.

Regarding the two Indians involved in the discussion, had they lived in the village of Weckquaeskeck (Dobbs Ferry) on the Hudson, why did they travel by boat along the Harlem River to the East River, thence to Corlears Hook, and over the trail from Corlears Hook to the City Hall area on Manhattan? It seems more likely they would have moved down the Hudson to the Indian village of Sappokanican near what is now Canal Street and thence to the City Hall area, at that time a well-known route, or otherwise they would have continued on to the Battery. Thus reasoning, it seems plausible that this Indian and his uncle left some village on the Ahquahung River (Bronx River) in their canoe, as they could easily have reached the East River, the short route to the trail at Corlears Hook. Furthermore, the fact that the lad fifteen years later murdered the Dutchman on the East River shore would again indicate he came from the near-by Ahquahung River section of the Weckquaeskeck country.

So, in piecing together the available data, a more revealing story can be unfolded. Perhaps a fair inference would be that this Indian youth resided in Aquehung

and made the trip to Manhattan down the Ahquahung River with his uncle; that after his uncle was murdered in 1626 he returned to Aquehung to bide his time for the next fifteen years. As he grew to manhood he doubtless often thought of his obligation to his family and tribe, planning ways and means to discharge his duty. Probably, with a heavy heart carried for many years, he stepped into his canoe on the sandy shore of Lake Aquehung for the fatal trip down the river in the fall of 1641. He may have decided it was too late to find the original murderers, and it would be a foolhardy act to go to Fort Amsterdam to avenge the deed. So he stopped at the home and store of Claes Smit, a Dutchman he knew. It was located on Manhattan Island near what is now East 45th Street and East River. Pulling his canoe ashore, he went into the small store on the pretext of buying cloth, and when the Dutchman's back was turned, dealt him a fatal blow on the head. No doubt this obligation had weighed heavily on the youth's mind, for he already had reached the age to assume responsibility for avenging the earlier deed. Acting quickly, he fled by canoe up the East and Ahquahung Rivers to the safety of his village of Aquehung without realizing or weighing the terrible consequences of his act—and probably not caring, since he had lifted the crushing load from his shoulders.

If Claes Smit knew this Indian, as he evidently did or he would not have trusted him, then others also knew him. So the Dutch authorities knew where to find him. They demanded his surrender, and when this was refused the expedition naturally was ordered to Aquehung, both to capture the murderer and to teach the tribe a lesson. Not only had the chief refused to surrender the Indian, but also he had taunted Kieft with a message stating that he regretted he had not killed ten Dutchmen. Thus the sachem of Aquehung defied the Dutch nation as well as insulted it.

The Dutch expedition then crossed the Muscoota (Har-

lem) River at the "wading place," near what is now Kingsbridge, where the water was shallow at low tide. From there it followed the old Indian trail, once known as the Westchester Trail and later as the old Boston Road, over a winding route east to the present Jerome Avenue, thence north on the latter to Van Cortlandt Avenue East, then to Kimball Avenue and to Mile Square Road. It is worth noting that this was also the route of Washington's army from Kingsbridge to Valentine Hill 134 years later. Of interest is the fact that on an old map of 1785 it was shown as the only direct land route from the Harlem River area to the Armeperahin River and Aquehung region.

These facts would further lead to the conclusion that the Dutch knew exactly where they were going and that they were en route to Aquehung. It is obvious they were on a well-beaten trail, the one selected before they left home. They were still on that trail when they arrived at the Armeperahin River. But at Armeperahin Junction, where four Indian trails converged at the bend in the river, they realized they were in very rugged country and getting themselves into a dangerous position. If they turned east on the Tuckahoe trail toward Aquehung, they would leave their rear open to attack by Indian bands arriving over the western and northern trails, and they could expect an ambuscade at any point between there and the village of Aquehung a mile or more away. Any experienced guide acquainted with the country knew that this river flowed east at this point through the village of Aquehung to join the Ahquahung River. At the bend of the Armeperahin, where these Indian trails converged, the guide could have determined the direction by checking the flow of the stream and he would have known their location even after dark. Rather than get lost, it seems more likely that this guide, with night coming on, feared an ambuscade in the heart of this Indian country and deliberately misled the Dutch; or perhaps the Dutch leader was

fearful of going farther for the same reason and reported they had got lost. They were not hopelessly lost, however, because they easily found their return route back home.

Some old records refer to the fact that the Dutch were puzzled because the Indians had not already attacked along the way, and probably were wondering what trap was being laid for them. Doubtless they were tense, cautious, and not without some fear as the shadows began to fall on that momentous day. They had followed a long, rough march through woods and hilly country and were beginning to see Indians behind the large trees and were expecting more around each bend. Their reactions can only be surmised, but their decision to return to the protection of their own forts appears to have been a strategic move urged on by doubt and fear. History does not record the incidents of the Dutch return trip, but one can imagine it was not pleasant and that they regretted to face their comrades with the report of failure without even a battle.

One might designate the incident as the Battle of Armeperahin Junction, won by the Indians with the strategy of silence and absence while creating sufficient doubt and tension to disrupt the foe. The net result, however, of this famous expedition was that both sides, after many powwows among themselves, decided it would be best to settle their differences in a peaceable manner.

Historians agree that soon thereafter a meeting was arranged between the Indians and the Dutch at the home of Jonas Bronck on the Ahquahung River, about halfway between the Indian village of Aquehung and the Harlem River. There a treaty of peace was signed. The Indians agreed to give up the murderer to prevent further hostilities, but the records show that he was never surrendered. It is noteworthy that this meeting was arranged to be held on the Ahquahung River. That plan again leads to the conclusion that the Indian village of Aquehung was involved in this incident and not the village of Dobbs Ferry on the Hudson.

An early picture of St. John's Church, one of the famous churches of America. It was built in 1752, during the English Manor era. (Photo by courtesy of H. Armour Smith.)

A view of Philipse Manor Hall in its early surroundings on the old country road leading down to the Hudson. (Courtesy of H. Armour Smith.)

The imposing St. Joseph's Seminary atop the famous Valentine Hill of Revolutionary fame.

Mainly as a result of this incident and the arguments that followed, war finally broke out in 1643, when the Weckquaeskecks and the other Algonquin tribes in Westchester banded together and in raids and massacres killed most of the settlers and destroyed their homes, not only in Westchester but also on Manhattan Island outside the fort. This was a serious blow to the colony, and if the Indians had followed up their advantage it might have been its end.

While the Dutch were trying to obtain help, John Underhill, at the head of a small force of English residents of New Netherlands, surprised and attacked the Indians on Long Island. After badly defeating them, he moved over into Westchester, where he finally conquered the Indian Confederacy, killing about seven hundred in a battle near Greenwich. That ended the Indian wars for some years.

In 1646 a man who had much to do with the final restoration of peace secured from the West India Company a grant of the region and later reinforced his title by direct purchase from the natives. This first white owner of the Yonkers territory, including the Aquehung area, was Adriaen van der Donck, Doctor of Laws. He was a cultured member of a Dutch family, and came to New Netherlands in 1641 as sheriff of Rensselaerwyck. The grant was made in consideration of his valuable services in arranging peace with the Indians, thoroughly aroused over their treatment by Director-General Kieft. The latter neither understood them nor seemed inclined to do so. The property extended from the Hudson River on the west to Amackassin Creek on the north, to the Ahquahung River on the east, and to Spuyten Duyvil Creek on the south. The little stream, Amackassin, sometimes spelled Mackakassin, derived its title from a large rock located at its confluence with the Hudson. It was a landmark with the Indians, being mentioned in many Dutch and English deeds. The name meant "fishing-place stone."

For the first time Aquehung and Yonkers were officially transferred from the red man's to the white man's world. It

was a momentous occasion, but there was no celebration in the villages of Aquehung and Nappeckamack, where the natives ignored mere rumor and legend. Possession was all that mattered to them. Such an event, however, can happen only once in the history of an area; so it should be properly monumented somewhere in the present Yonkers. If a more suitable place cannot be found, the huge boulder on Midland Avenue near the Lawrence Park Golf Clubhouse would make a permanent monument.

In the meantime Stuyvesant had succeeded Kieft as Director-General in May, 1647. He took steps to placate the Indians, and in 1649 held a friendly parley at which he bought "the tract extending across Westchester from the East to the North River, called 'Weckquaeskeck.'" Undoubtedly he hoped this would settle Indian claims and quiet them. However, as the months passed the red men saw with mounting resentment the continual advance of the whites who, in increasing numbers, were settling in the region. Finally, the killing of a squaw caught stealing peaches in an orchard on Manhattan Island ignited the flames and the Westchester Indians arose to sweep out the intruders. They laid waste all of Manhattan Island and all the farms of the colonists in Bronck's Land and Colendonck, killing many whites and taking others prisoners. The Dutch troops were away at the time at the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, but Stuyvesant hurried back to ransom the prisoners and set up a defense for the future. That was the last serious outbreak of the Westchester tribes.

The region, in 1652, became a colony of which Van der Donck became Patroon. In an octroi dated May 26, 1652, granting him power to bequeath his fief, he is called "Adriaen van der Donck, of Breda, Patroon of the Colony of Nepperhaem called by him Colendonck, situated in New Netherlands." Colendonck or Donck Colony was the only Patroonship in what is now Westchester County. Another important historical fact is that on that date Yonkers, by edict, was

transferred from the democratic form of Indian tribal government to a completely autocratic government under the dictatorship of one man. That event, while of historic importance, was not a notable advance in government for the area. Even though the Patroonship was legally established under Dutch laws, it never became operative as far as the Indians were concerned.

The Patroon was alluded to in 1646 as "The Youncker"—also as Yoncker Adriaen Verdonck. The word "Yoncker," spelled in modern Dutch both "Jonker" and "Jonkheer," is derived from two roots which in Dutch, Danish, and German signify "young" and "gentleman." Sometimes the property was referred to as "de Jonkheer's Landt" and "Younckers Land." These expressions eventually became shortened to Younckers. By 1734 it was commonly called Yonkers, although during the later ownership of the Philipses it was frequently referred to as Philipse Land, Philipse Manor, and Philipsburgh. In 1788 the legislature formally approved the name of Yonkers.

After Van der Donck obtained his grant, he laid out a plantation on the Nepperhan, dammed the stream opposite the site where the Manor House was later built, and erected a sawmill, one of the first in the New World. This stream was referred to as Colendoncks-kil or Sagh-kill, meaning saw creek, and later was modernized to Saw Mill River.

Although Van der Donck did little to improve the condition of his large estate, he was, according to Hall, an interesting figure because of his many talents, ranging from sawing wood to the practice of law. He applied to the West India Company for permission to practice in New Netherlands but was refused, the directors declaring they did not know of any other person of that stamp in New Amsterdam who could act or plead against him for the other side. They finally consented to his giving advice.

It is evident that the Patroon of Colendonck was the first of the legal profession in the New York area and possibly in

the New World. The only contribution of Van der Donck to this locality is the word "Yonkers" and the name "Saw Mill River." He had no influence on the Aquehung village, as he probably never visited the far side of his great estate, still occupied and ruled by the Indians.

When Van der Donck died in 1655, he left the colony to his wife Mary. In due time, according to Shonnard, she married Hugh O'Neal of Maryland and moved there. After the English took over New Netherlands from the Dutch, Hugh and Mary O'Neal came to New York and requested a confirmation of their colony with the same boundaries. This Governor Nicolls granted in a Royal Patent, October 8, 1666. However, on October 30, only twenty-two days later, they sold the colony to Elias Doughty of Flushing—Mrs. O'Neal's brother—and the sale was finally completed on May 16, 1667. Doughty then sold fourscore acres of land and 30 acres of meadows near Kingsbridge to John Archer in March and September, 1667. Then on June 7, 1668, he sold 320 acres near Tibbetts Brook to Joseph Hadden for £5 and a horse, an interesting transaction; also, on July 6, 1668, about 2000 acres to William Betts and George Tippetts, the area between the Hudson and the Bronx Rivers, now a part of the Bronx. Doughty sold in 1670 a tract one mile square to Francis French, Ebenezer Jones, and John Westcott, which later was to become historically famous as Mile Square. On November 29, 1672, he sold all that was left of the old Colendonck, about 7708 acres, to Thomas Delaval, Thomas Lewis, and Frederick Philipse. This latter acreage was the beginning of the great Philipse Manor.

So the Aquehung community and the Yonkers area theoretically changed owners again within the "white world," when the English defeated the Dutch. The area was transferred from the Dutch to the English world and from Dutch to English laws, but actually the Indians continued to govern themselves. They were not concerned about world affairs or who claimed the area so long as they were left alone in

possession of it. From the foregoing it is seen that the title to what is now Yonkers changed several times, from Van der Donck to Mrs. Van der Donck, to Mary and Hugh O'Neal, to Elias Doughty, and then to Delaval, Lewis, and Philipse, all within about seventeen years.

A few hardy settlers began to drift from Manhattan over into Colendonck to rent property, which they could not purchase, and others followed as it came under English control. Eventually these settlers were to push closer and closer to Aquehung, and the time was approaching when it would change from an Indian to a white man's world. The influx of white settlers in the area to the south made living more difficult for the Indians in Aquehung. It cramped their way of life, and some of them began seeking homes elsewhere.

The Westchester Indians were, in 1674, called into a powwow to urge them to side with the whites in the King Philip's War in Rhode Island, but they finally decided to take no part in it. They continued, however, to sell their lands individually and collectively, until the last sale by the Weckquaeskecks was made in 1701. A good many remained in Yonkers, however, where the white man's law protected them. Even planting grounds were reserved for those who wanted them. They could hunt and fish equally with the white man, whose laws provided for their fair treatment. Some, however, went north to join the Stockbridge Indians at Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

These Westchester tribes later proved friendly to the colonists in their struggle with England, some giving assistance at the Battle of White Plains and other skirmishes. A band of about fifty of these Indians, including Chief Nimham, joined in 1778 with the colonials against the British in the battle fought over the southern sector of Aquehung and Yonkers. The Indians were outnumbered and poorly equipped, and the combat was unequal; but they waged a good fight against infantry and cavalry, nearly forty being killed or wounded. The dead were buried in Van Cortlandt

woods. The place, still known as "Indian Field," stands as a memorial to a great race. It is noteworthy that the last battle the Indians of Yonkers fought in the Westchester region was on the soil of Yonkers, which earlier had been their homeland; and instead of fighting the colonials for possession of the land at that time, they fought with them to free it from the British.

The remnants of the Stockbridge Indians moved in 1785 to join the Oneidas in Madison County, New York, and about 1818 moved again to the White River in Ohio. According to the census, only fifteen Indians, then civilized, remained in Westchester by 1880 and only four in 1890. All that is left in Yonkers today is legend, history, exhibits, and the numerous colorful Indian names throughout the area.

# 5

# An English Manorial Grant

FREDERICK PHILIPSE, purchaser of the third interest in the Van der Donck plantation that included Yonkers, was the real founder of the city, having erected for his home in 1682 the first substantial building, later known as Manor Hall. According to Edward Hall, he was active in New Amsterdam as a carpenter, architect, builder, and dealer in real estate; later his genius as a trader established him as the leading merchant of his day and one of the founders of commercial New York. Lands and mills, together with foreign commerce, river traffic, and Indian trade, combined to bring him wealth.

The records of the period are replete with Philipse's covering of a wide range of transactions in which he bartered and sold many kinds of merchandise. He accepted payment in whatever form convenient, and also loaned money as a banker. If customers were unable to pay, he took notes, silverware, or mortgages on their houses as well as on their clothing. In a 1664 lawsuit Anneke Ryzen testified that she had pawned her gown and petticoat to Frederick Philipse for a debt of 160 guilders.

Philipse married Margaret Hardenbrook in 1662. She possessed both beauty and education plus acute business acumen. She bought and sold on her own account, operated ships, and frequently went to Holland to attend to commercial affairs. In June, 1686, when Philipse bought the holdings of his associates in the Yonkers Plantation, the area again came under the control of one man. Philipse, in those

days, spent more time in New York than in Yonkers, but he made many trips back and forth by horse and boat. He may never have visited the Aquehung area, perhaps preferring to remain on the easily reached shores of the Hudson. Philipse's wife Margaret died in 1691, and a year later he married Catherine Van Cortland, who was young, comely, and the possessor of an amiable disposition and charming manner. The following year they were given the title of "Lord" and "Lady" and the Philipse estate became a "manor," the family residence in Yonkers becoming Manor House.

The Royal Charter, dated June 12, 1693, by William and Mary, changed Philipse's possessions into a Lordship or Manor of Philipsborough, for which he was to pay an annual rent of £4 12s. Thus in the elevating process the area now Yonkers attained to the summit of social rating, becoming a more dignified entity, as it moved from the levels of Donck's Colony, Yonkers Plantation, and Philipse Estate to the top stratum of an English manor.

It would be interesting to know just what the Indian inhabitants really thought of this move. Even had they understood the complexities of English patents and titles, they doubtless wondered who this William and Mary were to be able to make such grants and transfer their lands to the Lord and Lady. They must have been quite certain their Grand Sachem was more important and invested with more authority than these newcomers. The Indian villagers may have decided that a social event in Manor Hall was tame and the costumes something to view with amusement. Perhaps they were quite sure they could stage a much better show in the Aquehung Bowl or on their Nappeckamack grounds when dressed in all their Indian finery.

Were the facts known, the red men probably did no more than utter "Ugh!" and proceed undisturbed with their plans for Busk, their great annual harvest festival. This was, to them, a far more important affair, steeped in the tradition of thousands of years. But their great villages had passed their

zenith, many of the Indians already having left the area prior to this era; and others were on the verge of following, while those remaining were in a state of suspense, fearing the dawn of a New Day.

The same charter granted Philipse the right to erect a toll bridge across Spuyten Duyvil Creek on condition that it be called King's Bridge, a name continued to this day. As a result, every person on Manhattan desiring to leave the island for the mainland of Westchester, or vice versa, had to pay Philipse threepence for each man and horse, the same applying to each head of cattle. Likewise every canoe or boat passing the bridge, causing it to be raised, had to pay ninepence and the same amount for any coach, cart, or wagon passing over it. It is of interest to note that by decree this charter closed a navigable stream to water traffic unless each boat paid tribute to Philipse for the right to pass his blockade. The collected tolls far exceeded the meager pittance he paid in taxes on all of Philipse Manor. So it became an important portion of his charter and a profitable venture.

The charter provoked much comment and many complaints at the time and probably had much to do with later regulations instituted to prevent the erection of a bridge or obstruction across navigable streams without Government approval, and then only when constructed high enough to avoid water-traffic interference, or as a drawbridge to be opened for free-of-charge passage of water traffic. Travelers today from Yonkers to New York can ride over drawbridges spanning this same water artery—the Harlem River—whether using automobile or train; but sometimes they are delayed when the bridges are open for boats to pass through.

Even back in the old days toll bridges were no more popular than now. The main difference was that Philipse had a monopoly with the only bridge across the water, whereas today when a toll gate is set up there are usually alternate longer routes not quite so fast to negotiate. Philipse could not have foreseen that in about 1800 the New

York State legislature would change the name of the old Albany Post Road—opened to Yonkers in 1669—to "The Highland Turnpike," order it made 28 feet wide, and permit the construction of toll gates on it. Two of these were in Yonkers, where stagecoach and other travelers had the option of paying the toll or bogging down in the mire. This ancient Indian trail—Road to Yonkers Plantation, Stage Coach Highway, Albany Post Road, Highland Turnpike, and Broadway —first the route from Manhattan to Philipsburgh and later a highway passing on through Yonkers, is one of the oldest highways in the United States. It was opened two years before the Boston Post Road became a highway. Its history is truly the story of the growth of the area along the Hudson. Its various titles tie it to the eras of the past.

A "trail," according to Webster, is "a track worn by passage through a wilderness or wild region." This old route was a trail during the Indian era. With time and more travel it became a road, "a place where one may ride, a highway," during the Dutch and English eras. A "highway" is "a main road or thoroughfare." It advanced from "a road on a farm" to a highway between farms. A "thoroughfare" is "a public road open at both ends" and as such was maintained for highway travel by the landowners along the way. "Thorough" means "passing through," while "fare" means "to go—to journey—to travel." Thus, "through" means "admitting free passage as a "through-way." "Way" denotes "a line or route for passage." So today there is heard a new name, a "throughway," or "thruway," as applied to a main highway constructed for through traffic.

During a long interval this renowned road had other designations—Turnpike, Post Road, and Stage Coach Highway. "Turnpike" means "a toll bar or toll gate"; also "a road having or formerly having a toll gate." "Pike" is "a toll paid on a turnpike or highway." Thus a road became a turnpike when tolls were charged. It blossomed out as a post road when it became a mail route, and a coach highway when

stagecoaches were operated over it. The latter designation comes from "stage," "a place of rest on a traveled road or a station or place for a relay of horses," and "coach," "a large closed four-wheeled carriage with doors in the sides and elevated seat in front for the driver." Thus, stagecoach—a coach which runs regularly between stations for conveyance of passengers.

In the days of Philipse it was inconceivable there would be a large toll bridge over Spuyten Duyvil or such fine highways leading to it from the old Philipse Manor with toll gates on the roadways. Some people currently complain about the new Westchester toll gates, little appreciating the fact that history is only repeating itself. However, one pays the modest toll of ten cents from choice, since there are alternate routes. The toll is paid with a feeling that the fine highway, which might not be there without the toll, saves sufficient time and effort to make the charge worth while.

By purchase from various sources Philipse finally gained control of some parcels of the old Van der Donck property, not then owned by him, until the bulk of it was in his possession. While this deal was under way, he was extending his possessions to the northward. In 1680 he bought Potantico from the Indians; in 1681, the adjacent land south to the Bisightick in Mount Pleasant. In April, 1682, he bought the land from the Bisightick south to Wysquaqua (Dobbs Ferry), and in September, 1682, the area south to his boundary of Philipse Manor. In these deals Philipse acquired all the lands of the Weckquaeskecks, including their capital village.

Bolton supplies an interesting list showing the type of items that Frederick Philipse traded to the Indians for a portion of his land:

| | |
|---|---|
| 50 feet black wampum | 15 fathoms of trade cloth |
| 100 feet white wampum | 12 guns |
| 11 kettles | 15 shirts |
| 12 larger kettles | 12 pair stockings |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 ankers of rum | 20 axes |
| 12 drawing knives | 15 hoes |
| 6 adzes | 40 knives |
| 12 blankets | 20 stone jugs |
| 12 fathoms of stroudwater | 1 iron chain |
| 50 lbs. of powder | 2 rolls of tobacco |
| 30 bars of lead | 2 pistols |

From a perusal of this list, it seems quite evident the Indians said "No!" several times and that Philipse kept adding more items in larger quantities until he satisfied them. In 1685 he bought the land between Potantico and the Croton River. In 1693 his Royal Charter granted him a plot of land on Spuyten Duyvil, and in 1694 he bought fifty acres (part of Van Cortlandt Park). By that time his possessions extended from Spuyten Duyvil Creek to Croton River, a distance of twenty-two miles. Thus Yonkers became part of an expanded Philipse Manor.

At the mouth of the Potantico Philipse erected a flour mill that became known as the Upper Mills, while those in Yonkers were the Lower Mills. They eventually became famous industrial plants. He also built there, in 1683, a stone mansion—Castle Philipse—and in 1699 Sleepy Hollow Church, believed to be the oldest ecclesiastical edifice in the state. Both are historic landmarks today.

Frederick Philipse was in full possession of this great manor when he died in 1702. In his will, according to Edward Hall, after leaving much property elsewhere to his wife and three surviving children, Adolphus, Eva, and Annetje, he bequeathed to his grandson, Frederick, along with some other property, "all the lands and meadows called 'Ye Yoncker's Plantation,' including houses, mills, milldams, orchards, gardens, negro slaves, cattle, horses, swine, etc., also a piece of land in Mile Square; also all that tract extending from Yonkers Plantation northward to Wysquaqua Creek and eastward to Bronx River; also a half right in the meadow at Tappan."

When the younger Frederick became the second Lord of the Manor, he was only seven years of age and an orphan. So the grandfather, according to Hall, provided further that his wife should "have ye custody, tuition and guardianship of my grandson Frederick Flipse until he comes to ye age of one and twenty years."

"A glimpse at the domestic life of the widow Philipse," says Hall, "would have shown her living in the height of Colonial style. She had seven negro slaves to wait upon her and the grandson. Her household equipment of plate and furniture were of the best and her wardrobe unexcelled. She had an array of petticoats which ladies of that period delighted to display—a red-silver-laid petticoat, a red cloth one, a silk quilted one and two black silk quilted ones." From this it can be seen that Lady Philipse, the First Lady of Yonkers, upheld the prestige of the community in those days as some of the ladies are doing today.

"Frederick was taken to England by his grandmother, where he was educated in the law and acquired the best traditions of his day. He came of age in 1716 and entered into the full privileges of Lord of the Manor. Three years later he married an English girl, Johanna, daughter of Lieutenant Governor Brockholls, and by this distinguished alliance the high social and political standing of the family was maintained."

Frederick was extremely social, had an active mind, was very popular, and advanced rapidly in public esteem. In 1719 he became an alderman of New York City and a justice of the peace and, contemporaneously, a member of the Assembly of the Province of New York from Westchester County and Speaker of the House. He also became Highway Commissioner of Westchester County. In 1733 he advanced to Baron of the Exchequer and second Judge of the Supreme Court.

Judge Philipse, in 1745, enlarged the Manor Hall to thrice its original size and landscaped the grounds. At that time Nepperhan Harbor was first used for the embarkation of troops. On June 4, 1746, during the war between England and France, the colony of New York was preparing to invade

Canada and troops from Queens and Westchester Counties marched to the port to embark on a sloop anchored there.

The second Lord of the Manor died in 1751 at the age of fifty-six, to be remembered, according to Hall, for "his Indulgence and Tenderness to his tenants, his more than parental affection for his children, and his incessant liberality to the Indigent, which surpassed the splendor of his Estate and procured him a more unfeigned regard than can be purchased with opulence or gained by interest."

In his will, dated June 6, 1751, Frederick Philipse left £400 from the rentals of his manor, to be used in erecting a church building for the use of the people in the area, and set aside the land for the purpose.

Upon his death, his son Frederick, born in 1720 and thirty-one years old, became the Third Lord of the Manor and as such inherited the Manor property, including Aquehung. He was a graduate of Kings College (the mother of Columbia) and had literary tastes. He cared little for public life, but was a member of the Colonial Assembly and a colonel of the militia. He was generally known as Colonel Philipse. In religion he was an Episcopalian, and was generous and ardent in church affairs. He and his family erected St. John's Church in Yonkers, which dates from 1752, maintained it at their own expense, gave about 250 acres of arable land for a glebe, and built a rectory upon it. It is one of the oldest churches in America—one with an illustrious past, and one that will continue to extend its influence far and wide.

There seems to be no doubt that the building of the church began in 1752, for Bolton reports that among the family papers was an account of the expenses of building the church at Philipseborough from November 1752 to December 1753, the whole amount being £623 6s 9d (about $3000). This sum exceeded the original amount in his will and the difference evidently was contributed by the Third Lord of the Manor. A portion of the itemized expense which is of interest is quoted herewith:

"Benjamin Fowler's Account in Full for Ye Church.

May 11th, 1753, dito 6½ days works at geting timber for the dors and the winder frams for the church, at 5 shillings per day, ..... £1–12–6

September the 20th, to working and going to ask people to come to work at the church, 8 days, & & .....

John Underhill's receipt for supplying the workmen at the church with beef, commencing Aug. 31st.

Madame Phillipse; dito 69 pounds of beef, at 2s 3d per pound, ..... £15–10–3

Received of Beverly Robinson, the above amt in full,
John Underhill."

Of current interest was the price of beef nearly two hundred years ago—about 55 cents per pound, and the builders bought part of their beef needs from Mrs. Philipse. In those days a supply of meat was not readily available on every corner, although wild game could be had if one took the time to kill it and could find ways and means to bring it in.

It is noted that wages were 5 shillings per day, about $1.25, and that John Underhill was paid for "going to ask the people to come to work." There were no telephones to call them and the farmers became the workmen for such occasions. Travel was slow over the trails of that time and the farms covered an area of many miles.

The woodwork of this original church burned in 1791, but was restored in 1792. The church is a handsome structure and a historic landmark. Much has already been written in the years gone by about this fine old church with its venerable tradition.

In 1756 the Lord of the Manor married twenty-four-year-old Elizabeth Williams Rutgers, daughter of Charles Williams of New York and widow of Anthony Rutgers. The large Rutgers farm on Manhattan covered a rather important area near City Hall. On this site was formerly the old Indian village of Manahatta, the Indian capital of the island, now

the Worth Street district, the greatest textile center in the world.

The village of Nappeckamack (Yonkers) was the over-all capital of the Manhattan tribe, while Manahatta was the island capital; so the two villages were closely related in the Indian world. It is an odd coincidence that Mrs. Rutgers should have become Mrs. Philipse, thus uniting the two villages again, a hundred and fifty years later.

The *New York Mercury* on September 13, 1756, contained this notice:

> "Last Thursday night, Colonel Frederick Philipse Esq. of Philipsburg, in this Province, was married to Mrs. Elizabeth Rutgers, widow of the late Anthony Rutgers, Esq. and daughter of Charles Williams, Esq., naval officer for the Port of New York; a very agreeable Lady and possessed of every vertue and accomplishment that can adorn her sex and make the marriage state truly happy."

After this marriage, Lord and Lady Philipse seldom appeared together in a carriage, as Colonel Philipse eventually gained such weight that the two could not ride conjointly in comfort.

The sister of the Third Lord, Mary Philipse, was one of the most beautiful and accomplished young ladies in the colony of New York. She was born in Manor Hall July 3, 1730, and, as she grew up, was ardently admired by many young men. Among her admirers was Colonel George Washington, who met her on a visit to New York. Later, however, she married Roger Morris in Manor Hall, the ceremony being one of the great social events of the day. It can only be surmised what might have happened had George Washington married Mary Philipse. The whole course of later events might have been different.

With the passing of time the day came when a crisis developed in the relations between the colonies and the mother country. It is regrettable that the head of an illustrious family, who had played so large a part in developing the new

country, could not have seen his duty in the same light as did most of his compatriots. For not agreeing with them Colonel Philipse paid a bitter penalty. His sympathies were well known to be with the old order, and when, on April 11, 1775, a number of Westchester County citizens met at White Plains to choose representatives to the next Continental Congress, the Colonel attended a rival meeting. On June 15, 1776, a committee demanded his attendance to answer charges, which he declined to do, pleading illness. Then George Washington ordered his arrest, and he was taken into custody on August 9, 1776, and imprisoned in New Rochelle. Later he was sent to Connecticut and placed on parole. On December 23, 1776, he was allowed to return to Manor Hall, although still on parole. In 1777 he violated parole by going to New York City, then in the hands of the British, and he did not return.

Philipse Manor was under the control of the Philipse family for nearly a century. At first the growth and progress of the Manor were slow, but during the terms of the Second and Third Lords it advanced more rapidly as the Indians gradually disappeared and new settlers moved in to rent the land from the Manor. Later the tenant farmers proved to be mainly in sympathy with the colonials in their disputes with the British, playing a major role in the Revolution. They not only defended their tenant homes against the British attacks, but fought for the freedom of the nation as well.

The records are not complete concerning the number of tenant farmers in Aquehung or Yonkers from the date of the disappearance of the old Indian villages to that of the Revolution. Judging from information gathered from scraps of scattered records, it seems a fair guess that around 1728 to 1740 there were no more than three or four tenant farmers in Aquehung and fifty in Yonkers. There are records of a bridge across the Ahquahung in 1728, later known as Valentine Bridge, located at a point near the present Tuckahoe

Bridge. This apparently would indicate a near-by white settlement at that early date. This Valentine Bridge often is mentioned in accounts of skirmishes during the Revolutionary War, and it became an important crossing on the road from Yonkers to Eastchester.

The period from 1728 to about 1770 became the Frontier Era. A few settlers slowly penetrated the virgin forests toward Aquehung, to discover the beautiful hills and valleys along the Ahquahung River. The Indian Era had passed into oblivion. The Dutch Era had hardly touched the area, as Dutch colonization had concentrated mostly on Manhattan Island and along the adjacent shores. The Lords of the English Manor were eager for hardy pioneers to probe deeper into the backwoods in order to clear the land and farm it so as to make the Manor property more valuable. Aquehung still was far removed from the beaten trail along the water front of the Harlem and Hudson Rivers and not easily accessible except by canoe along the Bronx River, or by horseback over many miles of narrow trails.

In 1698 the area now Westchester County had a small population of 1063, and by 1712 only 2815, located mainly along the coast line of the Sound and on the banks of the Harlem and Hudson Rivers. The area now Yonkers had in 1712 a population of 240, principally in the southern and western sections. It was too soon after the slowly departing Indians for settlers to locate in the Tuckaho Hills. To press forward into the forests and start a world of their own required men and women of courage, foresight, and determination to succeed. Some finally moved into the area, with a gun in one hand and a hoe in the other. The old flintlock served as protection against Indian raids from the north and against bears, wolves, and other animals still disputing rights to the territory.

As the pioneers organized small farms under leases from the Manor, they cleared the land and built the first log cabins in the area. They planted corn brought to this country

from England and the Continent, as well as potatoes and melons, until they could grow their own seed supply. In the interim they subsisted on wild fruit, berries, and the meat of wild animals fortunately available. Truly, it was the Frontier Era!

The first recorded official meeting of the inhabitants of Yonkers, then Philipse Manor, was in 1756, prior to the Revolution. Bolton reports these extracts from the old records:

> "At a public town meeting of the freeholders and inhabitants of the Yonkers and Mile Square, at the home of Edward Stevenson, in said Yonkers, on the first Tuesday of April, 1756, being the day appointed by act of the General Assembly of this province of New York, for choosing town officers and likewise to make regulations of creatures and fences. The underwritten officers and orders of creatures and orders of fences, were made by majority of votes,
>
> Jas. Corton, Supervisor and Pounder
> Benjamin Fowler, Town Clerk
> Thomas Sherwood, Constable and Collector
> David Oakley } Assessors
> William Warner }
>
> Edward Weeks }
> William Crawford }
> Daniel Devoe }
> John Ridder } Highway Masters
> Isaac Odell }
> Hendrick Post }
>
> Andrew Nodin }
> Charles Warner }
> Moses Tailer } Fence and Damage Viewers"
> Isaac Odell }

Things were beginning to pick up in the old Philipse Manor. Inhabitants, though tenant farmers, were organizing for the future and to protect their crops. Roads and fences and the control of "creatures" were becoming important for their farms. Among the names listed are those of Isaac Odell, of Aquehung, and Thomas Sherwood and Benjamin Fowler,

who lived on the farms to the west along what is now Tuckahoe Road.

It is not difficult to visualize this meeting in 1756, held in the small farmhouse of Edward Stevenson, where those attending received a hearty welcome. The food was plentiful, but the facilities for a meeting were crude. It was April and the weather was too cold for gathering under the trees; so they met indoors in the living room beside a blazing fire heaped with logs. The furniture was crude but adequate at the time. Some had traveled several miles on horseback to the meeting, which to them was an important and serious affair. They were thinking in terms of the future, about the problem of animal control, what to do about fencing their farms, and about damages which brought on disputes and problems developing from increased farming activities in the area. Farm lines were vague in the English Manor. No doubt they discussed their rights as tenant farmers as well as the rents they were paying for their lands, together with other problems of the day. It was the first authorized meeting of the settlers in the area and, as such, became a historic affair.

Another important meeting was recorded:

> "At a town meeting held for the Yonkers, in the Manor of Philipsborough, at the house of David Hunt, on the 28th day of December, 1783, under the superintendence of Israel Honeywell, Esq., William Hadley and Thomas Sherwood, in pursuance of an ordinance for holding elections in the southern district, by the council appointed. The act entitled an act to provide for the temporary government of the southern part of this state, until the enemy shall abandon or be dispossessed of the same, and until the Legislature can be convened, etc. Passed the 23rd day of October, 1779. The following were chosen:
>
> Israel Honeywell, Esq., Supervisor
> David Hunt, Clerk
> Thomas Sherwood, Constable and Collector
> Israel Honeywell, Jr., Esq., Security

William Betts
Jacob Vermilyea } Assessors

Frederick Vermilyea, Overseer of Roads on the east side of Tippett's Brook
William Crawford, " " " for the upper part
Will. Warner, " " " for the middle part
Benjamin Odell, ---
John Archer, Overseer of Roads for Tuckahoe (Aquehung)
Jacob Lent, " " " from Lent's house to the mill
Stephen Bertine, " " " the Cross-Roads from Mile Square to the Bridge

William Hadley
Joseph Crook
Isaac Vermilyea
Stephen Sherwood } Damage Viewers
John Garus
William Crawford

Abraham Odell
Will. Hadley } Commissioners of Roads"
Thomas Sherwood

Many of these names are recognized as those of owners of farms on the 1785 map. They were the tenant farmers on the land during the Revolution and were given the right to purchase.

John Archer of Tuckahoe (Aquehung) was not listed as a purchaser and evidently did not buy his farm in this area. Most of the titles they carried then have come down through the years, but the "Damage Viewers" title seems to have disappeared.

Paralleling the southern border of the Aquehung community is the historically renowned Mile Square area. It extends along the Bronx River about a mile, approximately from the Cross County Parkway south to Yonkers Avenue. Some may recognize the location more readily if it is described as beginning near a point on the river opposite Fleetwood station and extending down to a spot opposite the Mount Vernon station of the New York Central Railroad. From the river it extends west a mile to a line somewhere

near Seminary Avenue. Mile Square lies mainly in a beautiful valley along the Bronx River and is protected by the surrounding hills.

This tract, previously mentioned, was exempted from the great Manorial Patent of 1693 to Philipse. It was part of the Indian Keskeskeck sold to the Dutch in 1639 and later granted to Donck, bequeathed to his wife, sold to Doughty, who in turn dismantled the original Colendonck by selling 2500 acres to Archer, Betts, Tibbetts, and Hadden, and then the 640 acres in Mile Square, before selling the remaining 7708 acres to Philipse and his associates. It seems, however, from the records, that Philipse bought a portion of Mile Square, for in his will he leaves "a piece of land in Mile Square."

During the Revolution, Mile Square was a favorite campground with both the American and British armies because of its protected terrain and proximity to a clear water supply. Ryche Mansion in Mile Square was occupied as headquarters, and some of the remains of the old fortifications are still visible there.

An old map of 1785 shows T. Rich as the owner of a 39-acre farm having an odd shape—a half spearhead—and also the owner of another queer-shaped plot of 22 acres. There may be some history involved in the borders of these plots. Benjamin Hunt owned about 150 acres, while the map reveals a total of eleven houses, without specifying acreage. The noted Reynolds Tavern on the old road, now Bronx River Road, is not far from the present Cross County Parkway. Kimball Avenue now bisects the old Mile Square north and south from the Cross County Parkway to a point south of Yonkers Avenue. Within this area off Kimball Avenue the imposing Wanamaker-Westchester store and center soon will be built.

Mile Square has retained its unusual title for 280 years. The Old Mile Square Road crosses it east and west and then, at a fork, turns north at the western border, winding its way

through the hills for many miles to the northern section of Yonkers. It is a fascinating as well as historic old trail.

Bordering Mile Square on the west and Aquehung on the southwest is another historical section known as Valentine Hill. In 1740 a farmer named Thomas Valentine rented 238 acres of land from Frederick Philipse of Manor Hall. The plot included the area now bounded by Cook, Bennett, Midland, and Seminary Avenues, Valentine Street, and Mile Square Road. After the Revolution, Valentine bought the farm in 1786 for about £2380, or $50.00 per acre. On Seminary Avenue a tablet now marks the site of the old Valentine Homestead, "Revolutionary House," where Washington made his headquarters during the Revolution. The site was carefully chosen, for they could see for many miles into the Bronx River Valley, Long Island Sound, and Tibbetts Brook Valley and watch the movement of the British troops.

St. Joseph's Seminary, which is atop Valentine Hill, bought a portion of the original farm, about 60 acres, from the Valentine family for $64,146.77. Its sale at more than $1000 per acre shows the increase in value in 106 years.

The cornerstone of St. Joseph's Seminary was laid May 17, 1891, and was a memorable event. One hundred fifty thousand persons attempted to celebrate the occasion, but only about 80,000 arrived after transportation facilities broke down under the pressing demand. Classes were started in September, 1896, with 98 students. Today, the seminary has facilities for over 250. Its graduates are leaders and workers in many church and lay activities around the globe. Over 1500 priests have been ordained there, and among its alumni it numbers some 10 bishops. There are 17 members of the faculty at the present time.

Historically, St. Joseph's has connection with the earliest days of the faith in Yonkers. The first Mass celebrated on Valentine Hill occurred Sunday, July 22, 1781. American and French forces stood about the altar, while the French

Abbé Robin offered the sacrifice of the Mass for the success of the war for American independence.

The Reverend Arthur J. Scanlan in his book about St. Joseph's Seminary, written in 1922, gives a graphic description of its location and the surrounding area:

> "Without an actual view of the seminary as it stands, it is difficult to realize its great extent. It is no exaggeration to say that its proportions are those of a university and its external aspect is in keeping with such an idea. Eastward lies an extensive country of hills, woods, and valleys reaching with a gentle succession of undulations to Long Island Sound, whose waters, sparkling in the sunlight, and white with the frequent sail, carry the eye to a chain of light-blue hills bounding the distant horizon. To the southeast extends the flourishing village of Mount Vernon, its church spires standing out prominently. Northward are the Tuckahoe Hills as far as the eye can see, while westward the Yonkers ridge, crowned with lofty trees whose openings reveal here and there a glimpse of the Hudson Valley, leads up to the dark wall of the Palisades, stretching in majestic grandeur away to the north. Below the hill is a valley of rich rolling land watered by Tippet's Brook and beautifully wooded."

Mile Square, Valentine Hill, and Aquehung have been closely associated, dating even from Indian days. The three communities had rich mutual experiences during the trying days of the Revolution.

Philipse Manor Hall, or Yonkers Manor Hall, is the oldest building in Yonkers and one of the oldest both in New York State and the nation. It is the cradle of Yonkers, and is historically famous and invested with great sentiment. The Hall is internationally known for its beauty, cultural background, and past associations. It is the connecting link between the aborigines and white civilization, having been built when the Indians still lived in part of the Manor.

Manor Hall is a brick and stone structure shaped like a reversed letter L, its long arm extending toward the north and the short arm toward the west. It measures about 26.1

feet across the north end and 91.85 feet along the east front; 62.15 feet along the south front; 25.32 feet along the west end of the short arm; 36.43 feet along the north side of the short arm; 66.65 feet along the west side of the long arm. The western exposure, 91.97 feet, slightly exceeds the eastern side in length, 91.85 feet. The building is not perfectly symmetrical either as a whole or in detail. The east wall is 1.7 feet thick. The other first-story walls vary in thickness from 1.89 to 1.93 feet. The second-story walls are about 0.25 of a foot thinner.

The building is two stories high, with an attic occupying part of the roof and a cellar under a portion of the structure. It has a Colonial porch about 10 feet in width and 6 feet deep, with wide seats between the pillars and pilasters. The steps are of red sandstone. The windows and doorways are not spaced symmetrically. The bricks used in the building are believed to have been imported from Holland—not a difficult feat in the days when ships sometimes used brick for ballast when coming to New Amsterdam for a load of New World goods. The bricks are more or less irregular in size, but generally are about 8 x 4 x 2 inches, except those of some other dimensions which seem to have been added in later years in repair work. The south door was imported from Holland in 1681. It hangs on big iron hinges and has a heavy lock 6 x 10 inches in size. The east parlor, where Mary Philipse was married to Roger Morris and where many brilliant social events were held, is 22.6 feet square between walls, but closets reduce it one way to 20 feet.

Philipse was an important man in the colony and to his home came the notables of the day. The high society functions were well attended and the Manor Hall was the center for many important affairs. George Washington, as mentioned before, paid court to the daughter of the house. It was the local seat of government of that day.

A work of fiction dealing with the Manor-at-large during the American Revolution is *The Spy* by J. Fenimore Cooper.

The complete story of the Manor House is well told by Edward Hall in his book, *Philipse Manor Hall.* Much of the information presented here has been gathered from that source. The building has been restored and will be preserved and protected against the inroads of a growing population which is sometimes inclined to demolish old landmarks without much thought given to their value either to their own or future generations. Not only the building will remain, but also its memories, associations, and legends of the past. Its frontier associations with the Indian race, the curse placed upon it by an old Indian, the development of the rugged countryside during its career, its position as a smart social center, its mysterious underground passage down to the Hudson River, and the Revolutionary battles fought around it represent matters of record needing no elaboration here. A visit to the Manor House is decidedly worth while. Mere words fail properly to describe this venerable Yonkers landmark.

Visitors are welcomed by Ernest Bergensen, its genial host, who, being an authority on the Manor Hall, easily explains its historic background and sentimental value.

Much credit is due the Keskeskick Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, along with several other organizations, for their determined efforts to preserve this priceless landmark. Particular credit is due the late Mrs. William F. Cochran for the donation of funds with which to purchase the property and to Mrs. Cochran and the late Alexander S. Cochran for the money needed to restore it.

The Keskeskick Chapter of the D.A.R. has championed many moves to preserve historic Yonkers. It is good that the city has this distinguished body of patriotic women ever on the alert. Yonkers has much history and tradition which can best be memorialized by the preservation of such landmarks as yet remain.

# 6

# The War for Freedom

AFTER the Battle of Lexington, in April, 1775, the residents of Philipse Manor could talk of nothing but war. Arguments and bitter disputes divided families and separated friends. The winter of 1775 became a long, dreary interim, a gloomy period during which the issues with the mother country were the all-absorbing topic of conversation as local plans progressed for entering the war. An act of the Continental Congress, passed January 19, 1776, ordered that four battalions of troops be raised for the defense of the Colony of New York.

The Committee of Safety in its instructions, according to Shonnard, "prescribed that the pay of privates would be $5.00 per month, and that each should receive, as a bounty, a felt hat, a pair of yarn stockings, a pair of shoes, and, if they could be procured, a hunting-shirt and a blanket. On the other hand, the men were to furnish their own arms, or, if too poor to do so, were to be armed at public expense, the value of their weapons to be deducted from their pay." The President of the Congress said: "It is expected that each man furnish himself with a good gun and bayonet, tomahawk, knapsack, or haversack and two bills." Volunteers could be from sixteen to fifty years of age.

Spring finally came to Philipse Manor, and there was feverish activity on the part of its inhabitants to plant crops to store up for a good reserve supply. Some of the patriots were leaving their homes to join the army in the battle for freedom. Spring turned into summer as preparations pro-

gressed to meet any emergency. Then an event occurred, on August 16, 1776, that fired the enthusiasm of the colonial troops. It was celebrated not only in Philipse Manor but throughout the area. The Americans had won their first naval engagement with the British on the Hudson River. British warships had entered the river and for more than a month had annoyed the inhabitants on both shores. Finally, while anchored off Yonkers on the night of this memorable date, the British were surprised by two American fireships filled with combustibles, which, in face of a heavy cannonade from the enemy ships, grappled with them and then set fire to their combustibles. These quickly destroyed one British ship, badly damaged another, and forced the remainder of the fleet downstream. The Americans lost only six men in the battle, the other members of the two crews escaping in rowboats during the furore caused by the bold stroke.

It was in this enthused atmosphere that the disheartening news arrived of Washington's defeat by General Howe in the Battle of Long Island on August 22. It fell like a bombshell on the Manor, for everyone soon realized that the capture of Washington's army would be a real calamity. Then better news began to trickle in, telling of the army's escape in a fog the night after the battle. While the British army dallied and the British fleet ignored an opportunity to blockade the East River, Washington had collected enough boats to slip his army, about 9,000 men, across the river to Manhattan and temporary safety. It was a bold military move, as much to Washington's credit as to the discredit of Howe. The patriots of Philipse Manor breathed more easily and waited eagerly for more news.

By October the British had occupied most of Manhattan Island, except the northern portion known as Harlem Heights, which Washington by that time had strongly fortified. Howe hesitated to attack that stronghold, which was garrisoned by about 20,000 men. Washington had received reinforcements from various states—mostly raw recruits, but

they were a welcome addition to his depleted army. By mid-October, however, many were ill, owing mainly to army food and the military life to which they were unaccustomed. According to Shonnard, the effective fighting strength was reduced to about 15,000 men. To eliminate the burden of caring for the ill and to give them better attention, Washington moved the sick across the Hudson. That wise shift also left him free to move his effective army on short notice if it became necessary.

Having decided that Washington's position was too strong to attack without serious losses, and becoming too impatient to lay siege and await the time element and a blockade to starve Washington's small army, Howe, after leaving a strong garrison on Manhattan, loaded most of his army aboard the ships of his fleet, sailed through to Long Island Sound, and landed on Throgg's Point on October 12. At the same time he ordered three warships, the *Phoenix, Roebuck,* and *Tartar,* up the Hudson to disrupt river traffic and act as a feint against Washington from that direction. The move later proved to be a blind to hide his real intentions, but the ships did interfere with the supply route to Washington's camp. The latter, about that time, had placed General Heath in command of the Westchester area and stationed him across the Harlem River at Kingsbridge [1] with a portion of the army, to watch the approaches along the Harlem from both directions.

General Washington, however, remained on Harlem

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[1] It is well to explain that the correct title for the bridge at this point across Spuyten Duyvil Creek is King's Bridge (Chapter 5). The area in old Yonkers, now the Bronx Borough, near the bridge was in the earlier days referred to as the King's Bridge area but at times shortened to King's Bridge. It is somewhat confusing to refer to the bridge as King's Bridge and again refer to the area as King's Bridge, so the later title of Kingsbridge has been used when referring to the area rather than the bridge. It is interesting, however, that the combination title of Kingsbridge was designated for the area in 1847 when a tract of land near the bridge was laid out for the village of Kingsbridge and stores and a church erected there. On December 16, 1872, it became the town of Kingsbridge. In 1874 it became a part of the Borough of the Bronx when that area was separated from Yonkers to become a part of New York City.

Heights, refusing to be enticed from his fortified position until certain of the British plans. He was quick to realize that from Throgg's Point the British army could travel overland over the old Westchester Trail and old Boston Road to Kingsbridge and cut him off from Westchester County, while the British fleet could block his exit across the Hudson. He had already stationed a small force near Throgg's Point, and this modest-sized company put up a valiant battle, holding the neck of this narrow point against all British attacks. Washington sent another small force under Colonel Glover to help them but held his main force intact and awaited Howe's next move.

The selection of Throgg's Point by the British proved disastrous to them, since they were unable to break through the bottleneck to the mainland. Finally, in desperation, after losing many precious days and considerable prestige, Howe moved his army on October 18 by boat to Pelham Neck. In the meantime Major General Charles Lee arrived from the South to assist Washington, who assigned him to the chief command in Westchester County, his post to become operative as soon as he was familiar with the territory. Lee subsequently was to cause much difficulty by plotting to supersede Washington.

A council of war, according to Shonnard, was held on October 16 at the headquarters of General Lee, at which Washington discussed plans for combating Howe and his flanking movement. This meeting was attended by General Washington; Major Generals Lee, Putnam, Heath, Spencer, and Sullivan; Brigadier Generals Mifflin, Stirling, McDougal, Parsons, Nixon, Wadsworth, Scott, Fellows, George, Clinton, and Lincoln; Colonel Knox; and possibly a few others. Washington immediately issued orders for putting the roads in good condition along the western shore of the Bronx River. The old River Route (now Bronx River Road, Midland Avenue, and Bronxville Road), the Mile Square Road, and Tuckahoe Road were doubtlessly widened and the roadbeds

improved for the passage of troops, artillery, and vehicles. Pioneers were sent forward to do the work, followed by troops to construct fortifications.

Washington evidently visited the Aquehung community on October 17, 1776, to inspect the hurriedly built fortifications, for Shonnard reports that after the council of war, Washington rode on horseback through the area in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the terrain above Valentine Hill and along the river. One can visualize the great commander-in-chief, burdened with heavy responsibilities, as he rode his mount, followed by members of his staff, along the River Road, stopping here and there to point out weak spots needing to be strengthened or to change some previously arranged plan. He was also encouraging his men as they went about their tasks of building the fortifications on Aquehung's rocky terrain. Washington probably nodded his approval as the many impregnable positions along the high shore of the river were pointed out to him, and may have returned to his headquarters satisfied that his right flank was secure, thus assuring him that the route to White Plains would remain open for his army.

About the same time Colonel Drake with his regiment of Westchester militia was ordered to put the Albany Post Road in repair. General Lincoln, with two regiments of Massachusetts militia, was ordered to proceed up that road to Tarrytown to watch the British fleet anchored near there. Still feeling some uncertainty as to Howe's plans, Washington decided to obtain some accurate information. He ordered Colonel Rufus Putnam, an excellent officer and engineer on whom he placed great reliance, to proceed on a reconnaissance trip, not only to find out Howe's plans, if possible, but to check the roads to White Plains. At that time Washington was complaining to the American Government about the lack of maps of Westchester. According to Shonnard, neither Washington nor any of his officers had any knowledge of the roads or the terrain of the country.

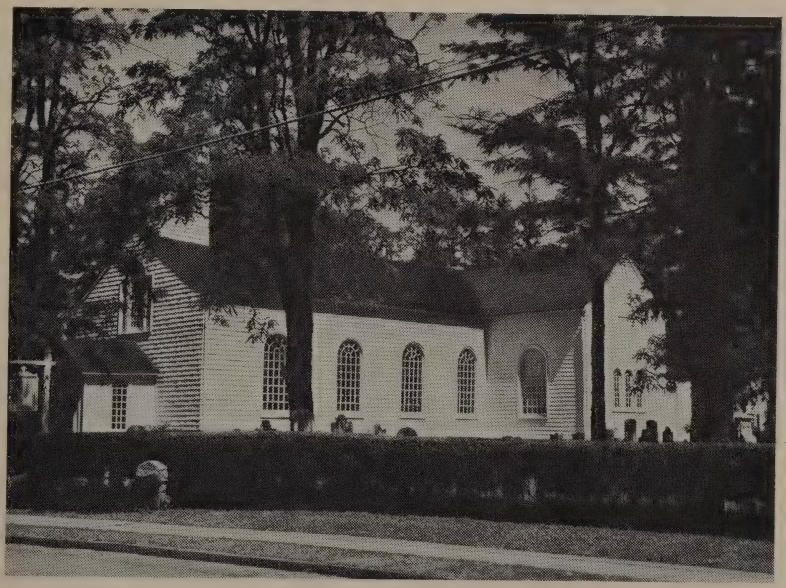
Colonel Putnam left Kingsbridge, Shonnard says, on October 20, in disguise, with his pistols under his coat. He was on a serious mission and had decided he could secure more information in that way. He realized he was risking his life and, if caught, would be shot as a spy. On the same day, October 20, Washington moved his headquarters across the Harlem to Kingsbridge, where it became known as the Camp of Yonkers. He sent General Spencer with his division to Valentine Hill. From there, General Lord Stirling was ordered, with his brigade, to the Tuckaho Hills (Aquehung) to establish an advance post. He arrived on October 20.

Stirling established this Aquehung post in Colonial Heights in the vicinity of Underhill Street, possibly using the Tuckaho Hills School or the Bowne, Underhill, or Smith homesteads for headquarters. It was an exciting night and an interesting experience for the small Tuckaho Hills community. But the people felt more secure with this small army of 2000 men blocking the cross-manor road, for they had heard many rumors of the British army at New Rochelle and of the British fleet in the Hudson. General Stirling set about strengthening the defenses and checking the gateways through what is now Pondfield Road West and the Eastchester Road. There were redoubts or fortified points, according to military maps of the time, on Armour Villa Hill, Colonial Heights, and other strategic points.

The remainder of Spencer's division was encamped along the Bronx River from Mile Square to Tuckaho Hills, where it was ready for action should Howe attempt to make a dash across the Bronx River to cut off the American army. Thus, it is seen that Washington was taking no chances. As it later proved, he was outguessing Howe, who was delaying his advance, thinking Washington was pinned down on Harlem Heights, afraid to leave his stronghold. Howe's delay and Washington's quick action gave the latter the advantage at White Plains.

In the meantime Colonel Putnam was on his way, and his

Historic Asbury Church on Underhill Street and Parkview Avenue—the second oldest church in Yonkers.



St. John's Church on Underhill Street and Grand View Boulevard—the third oldest church in Yonkers.

An early picture of the Getty House. When it was built in 1852, this hotel was one of the finest in the whole New York area.

A coaching party in front of the Getty House, in costumes of the 1876 period. (Photo by courtesy of H. Armour Smith.)

ride on that fateful day, October 20, 1776, constitutes one of the bright spots in the annals of the American Revolution. It should rank with the ride of Paul Revere in the history of those eventful days. Regarding its importance and its contribution to the success of the war, the ride of Rufus Putnam doubtlessly had an even more far-reaching effect. The entire history of the nation might have been different had he failed in his mission. It is almost unbelievable that a man could have had the stamina and ingenuity to complete that mission, but his route and deed are well authenticated. Putnam's sensational ride, however, has received neither the publicity nor the glory it deserves. Putnam was a competent military engineer who built the forts on Manhattan. He had the full confidence of Washington, who, on Putnam's return, accepted his report without question or delay.

Colonel Putnam left Kingsbridge, presumably in the early morning, and rode over the old Kingsbridge-Boston Road through what is now the Borough of the Bronx, and following that route crossed the Bronx River at Williams Bridge. He followed the old road north, now White Plains Road, and then east to reach the vicinity of the old village of Eastchester, near historic St. Paul's Church in South Mount Vernon. From the heights he saw a small body of enemy troops near the church and detoured around them to the old road which is now Columbus Avenue. A little farther along he turned off on a road toward New Rochelle to investigate again, but finding more enemy troops ahead, turned back to the old road. He then proceeded north along Columbus Avenue to the White Plains Post Road, which he followed to Ward's Tavern, the site of which is now in the village of Tuckahoe.

Being disturbed by the location of these troops, which were unknown to Washington, he decided to ride immediately toward Scarsdale and White Plains to determine how far Howe's advance forces had penetrated. In the area around Scarsdale he received reports of British troops near

Mamaroneck, only eight miles from White Plains. He knew that General Washington was accumulating stores and ammunition there, at the request of the Continental Congress, in order to have a supply out of reach of the British. By this time Putnam was thoroughly convinced that the British were headed for White Plains, not only to capture these stores, which would deliver a fatal blow to the American army, but to cut in behind Washington by crossing the Bronx River.

Arriving at this startling conclusion, Putnam quickly turned his horse back to Ward's Tavern. He had now been in the saddle about twelve hours and had covered many miles. Both he and his horse were tired. At Ward's, however, he found an assemblage of many excited people, with whom he mingled for a short time to gather more news and to give his horse a brief respite. The news was still disturbing and confirmed what he already knew—namely, that the British army was now two miles north of New Rochelle and could reach White Plains or the Bronx River easily in a matter of hours. Why they were moving so slowly puzzled him but still did not change the fact, in his military mind, that Washington and the American army were in for serious trouble.

Putnam knew there were only 300 men at White Plains and, as he thought, none north of Valentine Hill. He decided to return immediately to Washington's headquarters at Kingsbridge—a long journey, which would be difficult through unknown country, with night coming on. He followed the old road from Ward's Tavern through what is now Tuckahoe and crossed the Bronx River over Valentine's Bridge. At that point he could see troops on the Tuckaho Hills (Colonial Heights-Aquehung) and, discovering they were Americans, rushed forward, agreeably surprised and much relieved. He soon was at the headquarters of his old friend General Lord Stirling, who had just arrived after an all-day march from Kingsbridge to establish a camp, the

advance post for Washington's army. Stirling had left Kingsbridge shortly after Putnam, but the latter did not know it.

According to Scharf, General Stirling was a "bon vivant and an extravagant liver," so it can be taken for granted that the weary and worried Colonel Putnam was soon refreshed with food and drink if not with sleep. He gave Stirling his startling news, and that experienced general moved his outposts farther along, even across the Bronx. He began to reinforce this strong point on the main road from the Sound to the Hudson. Stirling probably started messengers down the Bronx River road (Bronxville Road) to report this information to other commands along the river and to General Spencer at Valentine Hill. Aquehung was probably seething with excitement as darkness fell on that memorable night, October 20, 1776.

Putnam secured a fresh horse and, partly refreshed, set out after dark, with only slight delay. He traveled along the old route, now Underhill Street, Central Park Avenue, and Tuckahoe Road, to the Saw Mill River Road. Why he did not take the Mile Square Road at its junction with Tuckahoe Road is not recorded. But the records seem to agree that Putnam followed the Saw Mill River route to the Albany Post Road at Philipse's and thence to Kingsbridge. It would appear that General Stirling would have sent him down the Bronx River Road to Mile Square or over Tuckahoe Road to Mile Square Road and to Kingsbridge, the route which Stirling had traveled that day. According to Shonnard, however, Putnam not only did not know the route he selected, but had to be discreet about inquiries made along the way, particularly around Philipsburgh, to be sure that he was not detected and delayed by Royalists. It is possible that General Stirling had already mapped the Mile Square Route and that Putnam elected to travel the new route through Philipsburgh so that Washington would have an alternate

route if needed. It would seem, however, more important for Putnam to arrive at Kingsbridge with his startling report than take chances on new routes.

It is also possible that Putnam intended following Mile Square Road but missed it in the darkness, for even today that road, at the Tuckahoe Road intersection, turns sharply up a wooded hill at a curve which might have obscured it then. The records show, however, that he found his way and arrived, highly fatigued, at Kingsbridge at 9 o'clock that night. He found Washington at his new headquarters, established there during the day, and was promptly received. It did not take him long to make his report and sketch rough maps of the area. The news electrified the camp, and Washington made hurried plans to countermove Howe. After refreshments and no further rest, Washington ordered Putnam to leave immediately for General Stirling's camp, with orders for that command to proceed with all dispatch to White Plains. Following the same route, with a fresh horse and without reported incidents, he arrived in Aquehung at Stirling's camp at 2 o'clock—five hours later. General Stirling had his brigade in motion before daybreak and arrived in White Plains at 9 o'clock that morning. Colonel Putnam accompanied him to White Plains to begin the construction of fortifications there. Thus it is seen that this famous colonel was in the saddle almost continuously from daybreak on the 20th of October, 1776, to 9.00 A.M. on the 21st, about twenty-eight hours during which he probably covered more than fifty miles.

Surely the ride of Rufus Putnam merits both more recognition and a far larger place in the records of the Revolution. Yonkers should begin this worthy movement by erecting suitable signs along the route he followed through its borders, and both Westchester County and New York City should complete the famous Putnam circle.

Washington lost no time after Putnam left that night. He probably slept very little, for quick and decisive plans had

to be made and such action taken as could have meant the preservation of his army and the American cause. He ordered the removal of his headquarters to Valentine Hill, where it was set up on October 21, and he ordered General Heath to move his division to White Plains immediately. However, since it was stationed in units along the Harlem River, it was not until 4.00 P.M. that it was finally assembled and departed from Kingsbridge. With remarkable rapidity Heath arrived at White Plains at 4.00 A.M., twelve hours later. One brigade of Heath's division, under General Clinton, had been detached and ordered to move up the Albany Post Road to Dobbs Ferry, there to pick up baggage and supplies from boats and proceed to White Plains. This brigade was also to keep an eye on the British fleet. At the same time the divisions under Generals Sullivan and Spencer were ordered to White Plains, where they arrived during the night of October 22.

General Lee was assigned the honor of bringing up the rear and was to follow immediately with the heavy baggage artillery and supplies, so important to the army campaign. Washington, however, foresaw the delay in transporting this heavy division and rushed the other divisions ahead in the attempt to beat Howe to White Plains. The commander-in-chief left his Valentine Hill headquarters the same day, October 21, for White Plains, to inspect the progress of the fortifications there and to organize a defense.

There is recorded a story about Washington's standing in front of his headquarters on Valentine Hill conversing with Valentine, when he sighted some British troops on the hill across the Bronx River Valley, now Mount Vernon, and promptly began the movement of his army to the north. This record says that Washington traveled over Mile Square Road to Tuckaho Road, thence through Aquehung over the Bronx River Road to White Plains. Whether or not he used Mile Square Road or the Bronx River Road from Mile Square, it seems conclusive that George Washington went through

Aquehung just before the Battle of White Plains and that a portion of his army moved through on both roads. One record relates that many of the troops were ill-equipped and some were barefooted, while others had the flintlocks of their muskets tied on with strings of tow because frequent firing had loosened them.

Before leaving Valentine Hill on that memorable trip, Washington is recorded as having offered the famous prayer not published until 1884. It was first published, according to Allison, by the *Yonkers Statesman.*

> "He quoted the twenty-second verse of the twenty-second chapter of Joshua, which reads: 'The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord (save us not this day).'
>
> "When considered that the words were uttered by the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary forces, at such a supreme crisis in the long struggle for independence, when the chances of success seemed more than doubtful, all that read them will regard this utterance as being eloquent and impressive to a degree hardly equalled by any other human expression of which history contains a record."

These military movements left the area around the Harlem denuded of troops, except for 600 men left behind under Colonel Lasher to hold the Kingsbridge area—an impossible task had any sizable British force attacked. While Washington was moving his army, Howe for some reason idled, moving his troops only a mile or two nearer White Plains and sending as an outpost a company of Hessians to the vicinity of Ward's Tavern. Why Howe delayed remains one of the military mysteries of that and of this day. The only explanation apparently ever offered was that he did not like small engagements and was waiting to attack Washington's army as a whole in an attempt to destroy it in one battle. Apparently Washington, by quick action, made possible by the ride of Colonel Putnam, beat him in a strategic-move and

counter-move warfare and reached the country he could more easily defend.

General Lee, after a slow and tortuous march over Mile Square Road, reached the Tuckaho Hills (Aquehung). He presumably left the Kingsbridge area on October 22 and arrived on the 23rd, although some records indicate he left on the 23rd and arrived on the 24th. Arriving in the Colonial Heights section, General Lee sent a detachment across the Bronx River to Ward's Tavern in Eastchester. These forces attacked a body of 250 Hessians, killing ten and capturing two. This act brought retaliation and a raid on General Lee's column in Aquehung, resulting in the capture of the general's wine and personal baggage, as well as some baggage belonging to Captain Alexander Hamilton.

Allison says:

> "When General Lee commenced his laborious march toward White Plains it was attended with great difficulty for want of wagons and artillery horses. Sometimes the toiling column was in open view of the enemy."

He also says:

> "The movement ... of 8000 men with a train of 150 wagons, which filled the wood for four miles, and with artillery often within half a mile, and within open sight of an active and powerful and well-equipped enemy, with very little loss, demonstrates the sagacity and perseverance of the patriot fathers."

Again Allison observes:

> "It was on October 25th that the heads of the columns of the main body of the Royalists, moving with great caution, arrived at Scarsdale, northeast of and near the present Yonkers boundary. The Royalist army encamped there, in a line parallel with the Bronx River, and north of the opposite side of the little stream, on which General Lee, with his heavily laden column, was transporting the baggage and stores of the American army towards White Plains. In many places the Royalists and the Americans were not more than a mile apart. In one place, if not in others, the toiling Americans were in sight of their

powerful foe. The records seem to indicate that Howe planned an attack on Lee's column, but that the Americans by a forced march along a more westerly road got beyond his reach."

From this report it seems evident that the old Bronx River Road (Scarsdale Road) was the route of this army, for it appears to be the only road which at times would have been in view of the enemy across the river. It also looks as if Lee left Aquehung on October 25, and on arriving in the neighborhood of the present Harney Road followed the old Bronx River Road as it turned inland over the present Old Army Road. None of the old maps checked show an alternate route. Lee, it seems, arrived at Chatterton Hill on October 26. Meanwhile Washington had established his headquarters at White Plains on October 23, but from the 21st to the 23rd he was continuously in the saddle, supervising the movement of his army, the collection of more supplies, and the construction of strong fortifications to stop Howe and his larger and better-equipped army.

The battle that followed later on Chatterton Hill is worthy to record in this story as a climax to the movement of Washington's army through Yonkers. The American commander-in-chief had fortified not only White Plains, but also Chatterton Hill to the southwest. General Howe eventually moved from Scarsdale toward White Plains, having decided to attack Chatterton Hill first in order to remove that threat on his western flank. A terrific battle ensued, with neither side winning a victory; but the Americans, greatly outnumbered, finally fell back on the main fortifications north of White Plains. Howe refused to attack this fortified spot and eventually moved his army across to Tarrytown and later down to Kingsbridge. The Battle of White Plains had settled nothing.

Washington, in the meantime, had left General Lee in command of about half his force in the hills north of White Plains while he proceeded across the Hudson River to carry on the war from that area. It is surprising that this entire

maneuver through the Yonkers area has been so often recorded as the "retreat before the Battle of White Plains." From a study of many records one cannot help being impressed by the fact that it was not a retreat, but rather a positive action taken in a battle of wits and movement. Washington did retreat to Harlem Heights, but there refused to move and offered battle. Howe declined battle and attempted to pass around him. It then became a question of strategy and movement. Washington outguessed Howe, beat him to White Plains, again selected his own battleground, fought Howe at Chatterton Hill in a delaying action so well planned and executed that Howe again decided to by-pass Washington's fortified position and proceeded to Tarrytown. The move from Long Island to Harlem Heights doubtless was a retreat by Washington after a losing battle, but from Kingsbridge to White Plains there was positive action, involving the maneuvering of a small army to outwit and overcome a stronger foe.

The chronological movement of Washington's army has been shown here, to present a clear picture of the strategy employed. The details of the movement of that army are interesting to Yonkers and to Aquehung because the line of march centered along the western shore of the Bronx River. The actual route of Washington's army from Kingsbridge to Valentine Hill does not seem to be disputed. Most historians agree that the various divisions, with the exception of about three regiments sent up the Albany Post Road, followed the old Kingsbridge-Boston Road to what is now Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, then to Van Cortlandt Park East, thence along the old road which crossed the Yonkers line along Kimball Avenue. Then they probably followed Empire Street, next Trenchard Street to Mile Square Road, and then to Valentine Hill.

From the Mile Square or Valentine Hill area to White Plains the route of the army has been marked by the State of New York as having been along Mile Square Road and

Sprain Road, while many records show the route of a sizable portion of the army to have been over the present Tuckahoe Road and Scarsdale Road. Thus a study of the roads and of the location of the fortified entrenchments, as well as of the available data, is an informing experience. There are various references to fortified points along the Bronx River from Mile Square to Tuckaho Hills. There was a road along the river, as shown on the map of 1785, which is now a portion of Bronx River Road, Midland Avenue, and Bronxville Road. This route was evidently used by some of the troops in Washington's army—perhaps by General Spencer's division, which occupied these fortifications. It was a natural route to follow because it lay along the fortified heights and the troops could be available if needed to fight off the British army. There was also the Mile Square Road to Tuckahoe Road. At this junction Tuckahoe Road led east to the Tuckaho Hills and thence north to Chatterton Hill. At the same junction Sprain Road led north to Chatterton Hill.

It is not the purpose of this work to enter into a debate or controversy over historical markers. There is, instead, a desire to see more of them erected and, if possible, carry a legend of every historical incident in Yonkers. It is important, however, that markers be properly placed before available records are lost. There is no wish to detract from the Sprain Road route or its historic value, but there is a real desire to have other routes also properly marked. After a study, however, of several maps and of many records of the movement of Washington's army, it seems difficult to prove the accuracy of the legends on Sprain Road.

In the first place, some historians write of the "March of General Washington and his army" or the "March of Washington's army," and even of the "Retreat of Washington and his army." It appears to be quite clear that Washington's troops, before the Battle of White Plains, did not move as an army, but rather as individual divisions on different sched-

ules. Apparently Washington did not march or retreat with his army, or even with a part of "his marching army." He was at his headquarters in Kingsbridge on the night of October 20, 1776. He moved with his staff to establish new headquarters on Valentine Hill on the 21st. He left his headquarters there and proceeded on horseback to White Plains on the 21st. He is reported as having been in the saddle "here and there" until his headquarters were moved to White Plains on the 23rd. That does not indicate he was marching with his army, but rather establishes the fact that he was a very busy commander, in the saddle for several days, while directing the general plan of movement to outwit General Howe. From a perusal of the records it seems evident that the fighting strength of Washington's army was about 14,000 men at Kingsbridge; 600 were left behind with Colonel Lasher as a guard.

At the famous staff meeting on October 16 there were only five Major Generals—Lee, Heath, Putnam, Spencer, and Sullivan—who supposedly were in charge of divisions, although General Lee was also the Westchester commander. Very little is recorded about the size of these divisions. Allison reports General Scott as having been in command of the advance post in the Tuckaho Hills with 2000 men, but it seems more probable that General Stirling was the commander of that post. Scharf reports Scott in charge of a brigade in Heath's division, although Hufeland states that Generals Nixon, McDougal, and Clinton were the brigade commanders.

Shonnard avers that Spencer's division at White Plains included 2600 men. Allison states that General Lee brought 8000 men up with him. If that is true, then there were only 5400 men for the other divisions that preceded Lee. Three regiments had been sent up the Albany Post Road under Clinton and Drake, leaving at best only about 5000 men for the other divisions. If there were 2000 men with Stirling in

the advance post, it would have left only 3000 men to move with Heath and Sullivan. Heath had only two brigades, since Clinton had gone up the Hudson with the third.

The only point to this discussion is to determine the route of the majority of Washington's army. The course Sullivan traveled with possibly 2000 men is not disclosed. Whether he used Sprain Road or Tuckahoe Road would not determine the "route of Washington's army," but only the route of that portion of it. The way traveled by General Heath is not disclosed, but Scharf gives an interesting account of Heath's march. He says that General Heath's division moved with General Scott's brigade as the advance guard, followed by the heavy artillery, including two heavy iron twelve-pounders. The column was to follow in platoons or by file, the six- and three-pound guns to be moved between the first and second and between the third and fourth regiments of each brigade. Each regiment was ordered to throw out a flank guard, and General Parsons was ordered to furnish a rear guard of fifty men. Each brigade was to have a wagonload of tools, ordered moved with the heavy artillery. A guide was to accompany each regiment. In the event of an attack while on the march, the line was to form instantly, with the reserves at one hundred paces distant in the rear, the light artillery posted on the nearest commanding heights and covered by the regiment commanded by Colonel Prescott (artillery).

Scharf also writes:

> "The division which was thus pushed forward to White Plains was in light marching order, evidently taking with it no more than the personal baggage of the officers and men; that it was pushed forward with all possible expedition, if it may not properly be said to have been by a forced march; and that it was not halted in its line of march until it reached Chatterton Hill. It had moved along the roadway leading to White Plains behind and under cover of the line of entrenched camps, stretched along the high ground, westward from the Bronx River, from Valentine's-hill on the south, which had already

been thrown up and occupied, and it reached the Plains and rested on the high grounds at that place."

The reference here to the division having passed *behind and under cover of the line of entrenched camps* is probably responsible for the suggestion of the Sprain Road route. However, when one studies Scharf's full quotation it is noted that he speaks of entrenched camps from Valentine Hill to White Plains. Scharf also says the division traveled on a road "behind and under cover of the entrenched camps on high ground." Heath could have left Mile Square over the Bronx River Road and Bronxville Road route, and at some points would have been behind the fortified camps up to Colonial Heights. He then could have traveled over Scarsdale Road "under cover" of others. Heath could, of course, have followed Mile Square Road to Tuckaho Road and still have been behind those camps from Valentine Hill to Tuckaho Hills.

One old map shows the road located just behind the fortified camps, obviously misplaced on the map. Heath could have traveled over Tuckaho Road, at that time a good road, to the Tuckaho Hills. The division could then have moved up over the old road, now Scarsdale Road, "under cover" of the forts on top of the ridge, to the Old Army Road where it turned up and over the ridge again and behind the forts along the ridge to Chatterton Hill. This seems the more likely route, having been already known. General Stirling had traveled it. The British were not yet threatening that road. Another indication is that the division went to great lengths to organize its form of march to be ready for a surprise attack. It would hardly have done this had it been traveling along Sprain Road completely out of reach of Howe's army. It should further be noted that the division, while on a forced march, was also carrying heavy and light artillery, wagons with tools and other equipment, and it probably chose the best road, the one previously selected by Stirling. The Tuckahoe-Scarsdale route was also the one fol-

lowed by General Lee with the heavy artillery and baggage trains.

Continuing this discussion, the question of a back road was mentioned by Allison in writing of Lee's march from Tuckahoe Hills to Chatterton Hills on October 25, when he states that Lee, when he found the British army camped across the Bronx River (near the Yonkers northern line—Harney Road), "took a more westerly road and got beyond his reach." On checking the maps it is found that at this point the old road turned in a more westerly direction, leaving the Bronx River and continuing on to Chatterton Hill. While this reference may give some the impression that it referred to Sprain Road, still it does not seem possible that Lee could have crossed from Scarsdale Road—after finding the British near Scarsdale —over to the Sprain Road. It is also informing to find that some of the military maps of that day show Tuckahoe Road, Tuckaho Road, Turkeho Road, and "the road to Tuckeho" as the old route, now Old Army Road and Scarsdale Road from Chatterton Hill down to Tuckahoe Hills. Scharf shows one of these maps in Volume 1, page 415. The Tuckeho Road designation on Scarsdale Road could also lead to some confusion between this route and the present Tuckahoe Road, known in the early days as the "Road to Eastchester" and the "Road to Tuckaho Hills."

That this was the real route is emphasized further by the fact that these military maps were made by military men and their guides. They knew the route from Valentine Hill to Tuckaho Hills and indicated the road north from that point to Chatterton Hill as "the Road to Tuckeho," the route they laid out. Allison also emphasizes the Tuckahoe-Scarsdale route when he writes about the route from Valentine Hill to the north.

> "The troops . . . continued northward, along Mile Square Road to the Tuckahoe Road, striking that highway about half a mile west of the site of the present pumping station, thence along the Tuckahoe Road to what is now Central Avenue (then

a winding country road). Following the old highway, they reached White Plains. In some places Central Avenue follows the course of the old road."

It should be noted that the old 1785 map does not show the Central Avenue route except as a farm road for about a mile north of the intersection of what is now Underhill Street and Central Park Avenue. The "old highway" mentioned doubtlessly is the old Tuckaho Road route to Eastchester, which turned north at Scarsdale Road as previously mentioned. This would lead to the conclusion that Washington's army, or a major part of it, passed over that route instead of Sprain Road. It seems definitely established that General Stirling and Colonel Putnam followed the Bronx River route (Scarsdale Road–Old Army Road–Tuckaho Road); that General Lee with the main portion of the army also followed that route, perhaps having with him General Putnam's division and the remnants of General Spencer's division, collected from the lower Bronx River redoubts. General Heath also may have followed this known route, since he had artillery and baggage. General Sullivan could have followed it, even though nothing to that effect appears to be recorded. It seems clear enough that historical markers should be placed on the Tuckahoe Road–Underhill Street–Scarsdale Road route.

If further study should result in approval of this analysis, then the Tuckaho Hills route should be designated as the "Route of Washington's Army." It is to be hoped, however, that the word "retreat" will be omitted and some better designation substituted. The Bronxville Road–Midland Avenue–Bronx River Road route also should be marked as the route of a "portion of Washington's army." Mile Square Road should have new markers omitting the word "retreat." Sprain Road should be marked as the route of a portion of Washington's army if there are records to prove it.

It would be an appropriate act to locate the exact site of the Aquehung camp and monument it, and also the fortified

camp on Armour Villa Hill. The sites of various redoubts along the Bronx River also should be appropriately marked. Allison, over fifty years ago, suggested that a monument to "The Heroes of 1776" be erected on Valentine Hill near Washington's old headquarters. It still ought to be done, as it is an appropriate site.

It is quite obvious that the Aquehung community was the center of much activity during this operation from October 16 to 26, 1776. There were many other skirmishes and military actions staged within its borders at different times during the war. Allison says, without a date line:

> "A company of horsemen under DeLancey, the leader of the Westchester Tory light horse Corps, killed or mortally wounded nine patriots near the old road by the Odell property. A touching incident in connection with the occurrence is on record: A dog belonging to one of the Americans who fell, took up his quarters at Mr. Caleb Smith's who lived a mile below. The ladies of Mr. Smith's family were in the habit of frequently visiting their neighbor, Mr. Odell. The dog would go with them halfway and then return. It appears that nothing could ever tempt him to pass the fatal spot."

That historic spot evidently is near the Mohegan Heights–Colonial Heights boundary on the old Bronx River Road, for that would be about halfway between the Caleb Smith house and the Odell house if one was traveling by this road. It should be definitely located and properly marked for the benefit of the community. Many stories have been written about dogs—their faithfulness, loyalty, and almost human intelligence. One cannot help wondering what line of reasoning or instinctive impulse caused that dog to follow those people day after day to a point near that particular spot and always turn back before reaching it. If he was afraid to pass it, why did he go so near the spot? If he was seeking his master, he could have gone alone and not with people going that way. If he had no intention of passing the spot, why did he go in that direction? Was it fear that held him back?

Was it some instinct or some power or understanding unknown to humans that stopped him? If so, what was it he could see or understand? A fascinating treatise could be written about this man's friend and his actions.

Another incident that happened close to the same spot also is thus related by Allison:

> "The British horsemen were accustomed to come down to the foot of the Tuckahoe Bridge over the Bronx to water their horses. The river had been bridged there as far back, at least, as 1728. Some patriots who were in the encampment of the American army on the hills to the west determined to ambush the Royalists. They concealed themselves on the shore of the river, but instead of the usual small number of horsemen coming down that day, nearly the whole force came. The hidden Americans prudently remained in concealment; otherwise, they would have been overpowered."

Again according to Allison:

> "A detachment of DeLancey's Corps, commanded by Captain Barnes, went to Hart's Corners on a plundering expedition. Major Leavenworth, of the Massachusetts line, planned an ambuscade. He concealed a detachment west of the hill on the Lent Farm. Some of the patriots were purposely stationed in plain sight on the hill a little below the church. Returning from Hart's Corners, Captain Barnes saw the Americans on the heights and ordered his men to move off by the opposite side. The concealed patriots fired, and the Royalists surrendered. Sixty-four men, the whole company, were thus captured." [St. John's Church was not built until twenty years later, so Allison was evidently referring to a location on a hill below where the church now stands.]

In another quoted incident Allison says:

> "Captain Honeywell on his way back from Morrisania with a few patriots stopped for refreshments at the house occupied by Jacob Vermilyea. The enemy, under command of Captain Totten, surrounded the house and fired upon it. One of the Americans was killed. The nine who were captured rose upon their guard and escaped."

Bolton says that Jacob Vermilyea at the time was occupying the Lent House, located about where the Roosevelt School athletic field is situated. The Vermilyea farm was about half a mile farther north. Coming up the river from Morrisania, Captain Honeywell evidently followed the Bronx River Road through Aquehung to reach the Lent House.

Another incident without date line occurred in the Aquehung community. Allison states that:

> "Benjamin Hunt, a Continental officer, succeeded on one dark night, with about fifteen men, in making prisoners of thirty Royalists. It was near the site of the schoolhouse that he gave orders as if to a detachment of many men: 'Lieutenant! to the right! Captain! to the left!' When the enemy had laid down their weapons and had ascertained that they had been deceived by the stratagem of the American officer, great must have been their mortification."

The school was on Underhill Street. Thus it would seem that raids and small engagements, hit-and-run warfare, were keeping the Aquehung community on edge day and night; and when it is remembered that this continued for eight long years, it is not surprising that many other stirring incidents were never recorded. Suffice it to say that the farms in this section were fought on, trampled down, and robbed constantly, and many weary-footed owners carried muskets over the old roads through the area.

But to return to the British army. The bulk of it moved to Kingsbridge on November 12, 1776, preparatory to the attack on Fort Washington on November 16. The British commander, following his success at Fort Washington, promptly moved to attack Fort Constitution (Fort Lee) across the river by embarking his troops through the Little Nepperhan Harbor at the Manor House. At 9 o'clock on the night of November 19, about 5000 men, under command of Lord Cornwallis, crossed the river and captured the fort the next morning without much opposition. Two months later, on January 17, 1777, the Manor Hall came back into possession

of the American army, when Lincoln's division marched down to join in the fighting at Kingsbridge.

Many times the Manor House and surrounding country were in possession, in turn, of the American and the British armies. It is surprising that the House survived under such conditions or that any of the farmhouses remained at the end of the war.

British General Tryon, on November 18, 1777, sent a small force of Hessians to burn houses in the Manor. Women and children, stripped of their clothing, were turned out into the cold; and men clad in no more than shirts and breeches were led, with halters around their necks, to the enemy's lines as prisoners. General Parsons, who commanded the American troops at White Plains, wrote a scathing letter about this outrageous act to General Tryon.

Sir Archibald Campbell occupied Mile Square and southern Aquehung in 1778 with the Seventy-first Regiment of the Scotch Highlanders. In the same year General Grant occupied the area with another force of Highlanders. Sir Henry Clinton and his expedition marched from Kingsbridge on May 28, 1779, in four columns occupying the land between Eastchester Creek and the Manor House on the Hudson, while he established headquarters at Manor House. More British troops arrived from Virginia on May 29, and the transports anchored in the Hudson River opposite Manor Hall. Major John André was Clinton's aide on this expedition. From this point the British captured Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, which, on July 15, were retaken by the Americans.

According to Shonnard, Tarleton was encamped in Mile Square with his British force of about 300 cavalrymen and foot soldiers when ordered to make a forced march north to Bedford and Poundridge to attack a small force of 90 American cavalrymen and about 120 militiamen encamped there. He left Mile Square at 11:30 o'clock on the night of July 1, 1779, in a rainstorm, arriving early on the morning of July 2,

and defeated the small American force. The record does not show his route, but doubtlessly he followed the shortest one north—either the Bronx River Road or Mile Square Road–Tuckahoe Road through Aquehung to White Plains.

A memorable event occurred on October 22, 1779—an event of interest to Aquehung and Philipse Manor; for on that day the State legislature at Kingston passed an Act attaining 58 persons, including Colonel Philipse, Mary Philipse, and her husband, of adhering to the King and ordered that they suffer death and loss of all lands and properties. The Philipses could not be reached, as they had joined the British in New York; but this Act ended the great Philipse Manor, which was declared freed from England, and it became part of the State of New York.

About 16,000 British troops under Clinton, after his return from Charleston, South Carolina, sailed up the Hudson on June 23, 1780, and encamped in Philipse Manor. They caused much damage in the area by burning houses and robbing farmers of food, cattle, and furniture. The American lines at the time were at Dobbs Ferry, the old Weckquaeskeck capital.

General Washington left Peekskill on July 2, 1781, and proceeded to Valentine Hill, where he arrived at sunrise on July 3 with a small force. He had dispatched General Lincoln with 800 men down the Hudson in boats, with orders to land at a point, now Ludlow (Yonkers); thence he was to proceed inland toward Kingsbridge in an endeavor to surround De Lancey and his British force there. The maneuver failed, however, when Lincoln unexpectedly ran into a De Lancey foraging party, which sounded the alarm, whereupon De Lancey moved his force to Manhattan. On July 6 Washington retired with his force to Dobbs Ferry, where he had about 5000 men.

A French army, about 5000 men, joined the Americans in the northern part of Philipse Manor on July 6, 1781. They encamped along the upper reaches of Sprain River, whence

small expeditions were sent south over Sprain Road. Some of the Manor farmers became familiar with the smart French uniforms as the soldiers of Louis XVI patrolled the roads.

On July 21 Washington sent a force of 5000 men from Dobbs Ferry to Kingsbridge, where they arrived at 5 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd. About half this force were French troops under Lauzun, and half Americans under Heath. These movements in and around Yonkers so frightened General Clinton and the British on Manhattan that they made no attempt to reinforce General Cornwallis in Virginia, which was evidently part of Washington's strategy while waiting for the assistance of the French fleet. Finally the American and French armies broke camp in the Manor on August 17, 1781, preparatory to going to Yorktown, Virginia, where the great war ended.

Yonkers soil has been the battleground not only for fighting between Indian tribes, but for engagements between Dutch and Indians, British and Indians, Americans and British, Americans and German-Hessians, French and British, French and Germans. But foreign troops have not fought on Yonkers soil since those days of the Revolution.

In the months that followed the British surrender at Yorktown, many things happened in the Yonkers area, as might be expected following so bitter a war—particularly since the region was cutting old ties with England and setting up new political divisions, laws, and regulations. Much confusion prevailed over ownership of property. It was difficult to clear up some of the disputes. The sale of the confiscated Manor real estate could not be undertaken until the war was won; but the disposal of personal property began in 1777, although only the items in the area under American control could be seized and sold. Corn brought 3 shillings a bushel, hay 3 pounds a ton, while one mare sold for 3 shillings, another for 10 pounds 3 shillings, and rails were sold at 30 shillings a cord.

The records of the sale of the Philipse property reveal one

of the almost forgotten facts—namely, the existence at that time of human slavery in this section and in the Colony of New York. On July 3, 1777, George, a Negro boy, was sold for 100 pounds, and a man named Pompey went for 150 pounds the next year. The British, in evacuating New York, took many of the slaves with them, but some of the aged and infirm were left behind to become public charges on the town of Yonkers. After the treaty of peace confirmed the independence of the United States, Colonel Philipse and family returned to England, where the Colonel died on April 30, 1786.

Although independence nominally ended the ancient manor system in America, it was so deeply engrained in the customs and land tenures of New York State that traces of it persisted in the Hudson River manors farther north for more than fifty years after the war. In later years this brought on many complications. The legal difficulty of eradicating the rights of the Philipse family to hold real estate acquired over a period of two hundred years was shown by the fact that the New York State legislature in 1911 enacted a law authorizing payment of $225,000 to the heirs for relinquishment of the claims to the mining and mineral rights on certain lands, about 100,000 acres in Putnam and Dutchess counties which had previously been seized. The measure was vetoed by Governor Dix.

The existence of these old mineral rights in the northern part of the old Philipse Manor prevented the granting of clear titles to real estate in certain sections. The Yonkers area, however, having been confiscated immediately, according to Hall, became free soil, so that the Manor House stands as a monument not only to the manor system when it flourished, but also to the earliest complete freedom from its tenures.

The sale of the real estate of the Manor, which, it must be remembered, comprised a wider area than the present Yonkers, was held in 1785. The total sales credited to the

Philipse estate, according to records in Albany, amounted to 235,413 pounds, 14 shillings, 3 pence. On September 9, 1785, 320 acres, including Manor Hall, were sold to C. P. Low of New York for 14,520 pounds. Mr. Low never occupied the property, but sold it in 1786 to William Constable, who in turn sold it in 1796 to Jacob Stout for 13,500 pounds. Mr. Stout later sold it for $60,000 to Joseph Howland, who became insolvent. It was then sold to Lemuel Wells, who died intestate, and the property was bought by his nephew, Lemuel W. Wells.

Manor Hall and a small tract of 6.62 acres were sold in 1849 to William Woodworth, and in 1862, under foreclosure, to Joseph C. Bell. Mr. Bell, in 1868, sold the property to the village of Yonkers. Manor Hall was used as the Village Hall until 1872, when it became City Hall. It continued as such until surrendered to the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society in 1911. The remaining portions of the Manor were disposed of in various ways and to many individuals, as will be shown later.

# 7

# The Dawn of a New Era

THE birth of Yonkers as an American community came at the end of the Revolutionary War. The ownership was transferred in 1785 from New York State to sixty-four persons.

The following is a list of those who purchased from the commissioners of forfeiture land in what is now Yonkers. In some instances a portion of their farms extended beyond the boundary of the present Yonkers. Others, such as James Van Cortlandt, William Warner, John Warner, and Frederick Brown, bought farms which were located beyond Yonkers boundaries but portions of which extended into Yonkers.

| *Names* | *Acres* | *Names* | *Acres* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sarah Archer | 18½ | Isaac Lawrence, Jr. | 210 |
| Thomas Barker | 189 | John Lawrence | 488 |
| Elisha Barton | 135 | Samuel Lawrence (Est.) | 300 |
| Andrew Bostwick | 155½ | Abraham Lent | 41 |
| John Bowne | 156 | Dennis Lent | 128 |
| Evert Brown | 312 | Philip Livingstone | 31 |
| Henry Brown | 113 | Cornelius Low | 387 |
| Patience Burnett | 173 | Mary Merrill | 14¾ |
| William Crawford | 202 | Richard Morris (Est.) | 117 |
| John Devoe | 136 | Joseph Oakley | 164 |
| Charles Duryea | 29 | Stephen Oakley | 29½ |
| Jacobus Dyckman | 39 | Abraham Odell | 324 |
| Peter Forshee | 170 | Henry Odell | 259 |
| Benj. Fowler | 305 | Isaac Odell | 144 |
| John Guerino | 99 | Lewis Ogden | 190 |
| Abijah Hammond | 69 | Parsonage | 107 |
| Eleazer Hart | 154 | Dennis Post | 135 |
| David Hunt | 41 | Isaac Post | 293 |
| Ward Hunt | 343 | Jacob Post | 313 |
| William Hyatt | 89 | Robert Reid | 141 |
| John Lamb | 202 | Margery Rich | 92 |

| *Names* | *Acres* | *Names* | *Acres* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Abigail Sherwood | 125 | Frederick Underhill | 125 |
| Stephen Sherwood | 24½ | Nicholas Underhill | 134 |
| Thomas Sherwood | 290 | Frederick Van Cortlandt (Est.) | 98 |
| Caleb Smith | 130 | Mary Valentine | 76 |
| Jac. Smith | 165 | Thomas Valentine | 238 |
| Isaac Smith } Thomas Smith } | 185 | Isaac Vermilye | 510 |
| | | Jacob Vermilye | 221 |
| Elnathan Taylor | 99 | Mary Vincent | 340 |
| Shadrack Taylor | 184 | John Williams | 177 |

The future fate of Aquehung was given over to eight families who had bought the farms within the smaller area. From that beginning the development of Yonkers, with its 11,200 acres, and of Aquehung, with about 1000 acres, was largely dependent on the initiative of the people, the fertility of the soil, and the accessibility of the area.

As an English manor there was no encouragement for the development of local communities. The area was rented to tenant farmers and the seat of authority was at the Manor House. During the Revolutionary War period the farmers were too busy to think about community activities, and even until 1785 the only semblance of community life in the Yonkers area was the small beginnings in three localities.

Philipsburgh, on the Hudson, was developing as a community around the old Manor House. Allison says that in 1785 it consisted of six houses—the important Manor House, St. John's Church, flour mill, sawmill, Hunt's Tavern, and a fishhouse. Allison did not include the four or five houses on the farms in the surrounding area which naturally gravitated around the community. Mile Square also was showing some life, with thirteen houses—including Reynolds Tavern, Guerino Tavern, and eleven farmhouses in the region.

The Aquehung community, then referred to as Turkey Hoe Hills, covering a larger tract, was recorded as possessing nineteen houses. Among them were Underhill Tavern, a blacksmith shop, and a school. Thus, in 1785 the Turkey Hoe Hills community was the largest within the borders of Yonkers. The community activities by that time had moved

from the Aquehung Junction area and the site of the Indian village farther north to the location of the school on the old east-west road, now Underhill Street. The school became the meeting place and the center of interest. By 1798 Aquehung had two churches and was growing in influence and importance.

A map dated 1785 unfolds a revealing account of the days of Philipse Manor—a story of its beginning and of its greatness, demise, and division. It is both pictorially illuminating and historically precious. A portion of the map covering the Yonkers area is reproduced here. It bears the following explanatory title:

"Map of part of
The Manor of Philipsburg
in the
County of Westchester
N. Y.

Showing the grants from the State of New York in the
City of Yonkers and town of Greenburgh.
Traced and reduced from a fragment of the
original map prepared for the Comm^rs of Forfeitures entitled
'a plan of the Manor of Philipsburgh in the county of
Westchester and State of New York. Surveyed agreeable
to the instructions of Isaac Stoutenburgh and Philip Van Cortlandt
Unto John Hills 1785'"

In order to compare the old map with a current map, dotted lines have been superimposed to show Palmer and Grassy Sprain Roads and Midland, Central Park, Yonkers, McLean, and Odell Avenues. In mapping the Aquehung area the map makers used the name Brunk's River instead of Ahquahung, Trout or Sprane Brook for the Armeperahin, and Trout or Grassy Sprane Brook for the Armonperahin, which serves to emphasize the change from the red man's to the white man's era.

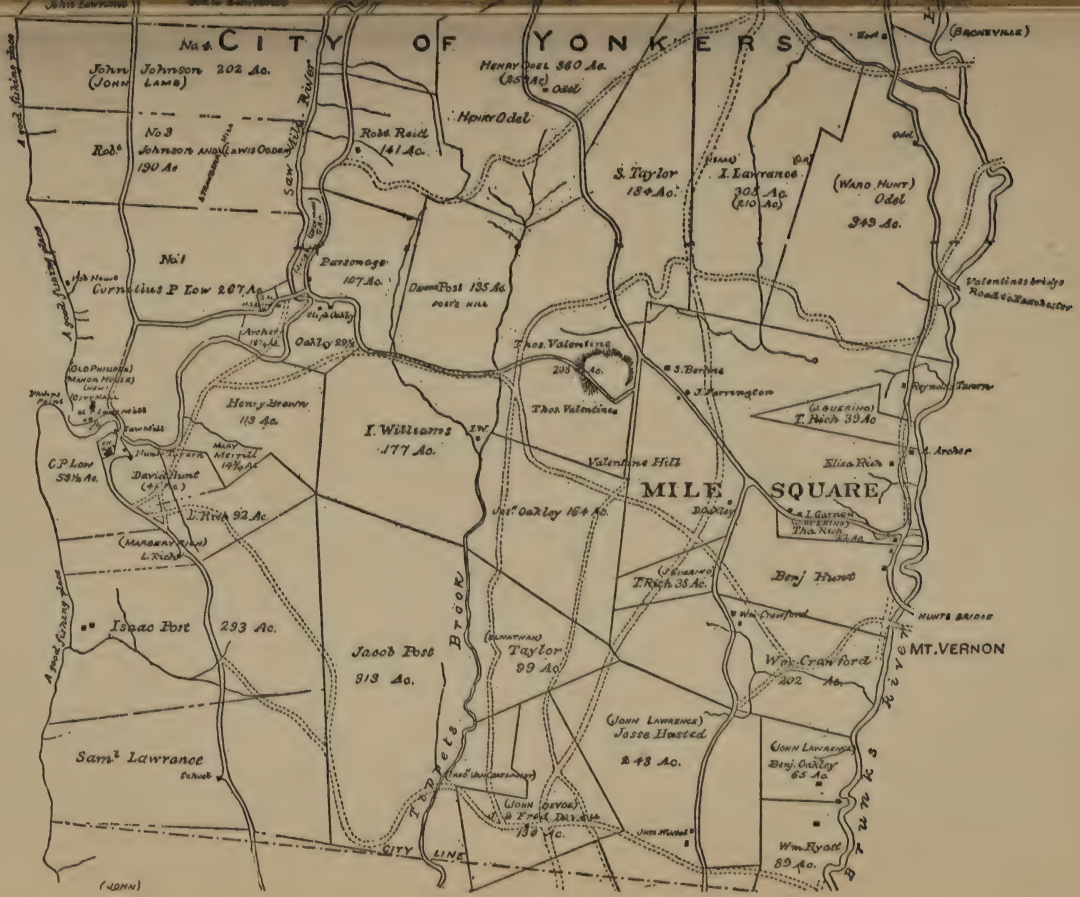
North of Underhill Street, Troublesome Brook flowed into Smith's Brook, which in turn flowed into Brunk's River. Someone must have had either an inspired moment or a troublesome hour when that brook was named. It is long for

its width and probably flooded the small valley when the rains were heavy. Smith evidently gave his name to the portion of the brook which passed through his farm.

The few roads on the map have been mentioned previously as following the general routes of the old Indian trails. The Bronx River Road (Bronxville Road) angled north past Aquehung Junction to the present firehouse, followed Cross Street to what is now Tuckahoe Road and thence across it to Iroquois and to Tuckaho Junction. To the left, Tuckaho Road led to the Hudson River, while to the right both roads continued over the same route north a few hundred yards to Underhill Junction, where the Bronx River Road turned left and north along the river over what is now Scarsdale Road, while the Tuckaho Road continued to the right and on to Eastchester over Valentine Bridge. The names of the junctions and the streets are not on the old map and are used only for clarity.

It is debatable whether or not in 1785 the north-south River Route from Manhattan Island through Mile Square, Aquehung, Scarsdale, White Plains, and points north was more important than the east-west Cross Manor Route from Philipsburgh and Hudson River points through Aquehung, Eastchester, and points along the Sound. They were both important historic routes and equally important to the development of the community. It would be proper for historical purposes to place signs bearing the legend "North-South Trail-Bronx River Road" and "East-West Trail-Cross Manor Road" along that portion of the routes where they merge and become one for about a mile between Tuckaho Junction and Valentine Junction, on the theory that they were merely crossing each other over this distance through the Tuckaho Hills. Central Park Avenue is not on the map. It was built in later years as an extension of Jerome Avenue from the New York City line to White Plains and was constructed almost entirely over a new route, using only short portions of old roads and trails.

TOWN OF SCARSDALE
TOWN OF EASTCHESTER
(PHILIP LIVINGSTON) 233 Ac.
Thomas Hyatt
(JOHN BROWN) 45 Ac
(JAS. DE CLARKE) 225 Ac.
Peter Post 286 Ac.
Jas. Clark
School House
HASTINGS
Peter Post
(JACOBUS DYCKMAN) J. Dyckmans 318 Ac. (285 Ac.)
Dobbs
J. Dyckmans
GEORGE FISHER (Adrian) (LEFORGE) James Fargee 277½ Ac.
Brown's Public Landing
Brown's Tavern
(EVERT) E. Brown 312 Ac.
Forshee's Landing
(PETER) P. Forshee 270 Ac.
Hog Hill
(ABRAHAM) A. Odel 324 Ac.
A Odel
No. 11 (ABRAHAM) A. Lent 31 Ac
No. 12 Cornelius P. Low 33 Ac.
No. 13 Cornelius P. Low 33½ Ac.
No. 19 A. Odel 31 Ac. (PHILIP LIVINGSTON)
No. 17 D. Hunt 39 Ac. (JACOBUS DYCKMAN)
No. 16 Andrew Bostwick
(CHAS DURYEA) 29 Ac.
Great Bear Cove
No. 8 Andr. Bostwick 24 Ac.
179 Ac.
Isaac Lawrance 226 Ac. (189 Ac.)
Sarah Odel 197 Ac. (JOHN BREVOORT)
S. Odel
Mary Vincent 340 Ac.
D. Williams 55 Ac.
CITY LINE
I. Vermilya 510 Ac.
Trout or Sprane Brook
I Sherrard 396 Ac. (THOS. SHERWOOD) 290 Ac.
Cat Rock
B. Fowler
Jno McChaine
Jas. Mc Chaine 325 Ac.
J. O. Underhill 506 Ac. (FOCORNELIUS RAY)
Patience Burnett 136 Ac. (HON. RICHARD MORRIS)
Patience Burnett 173 Ac.
Troublesome Brook
Thos. Barker 189 Ac.
Underhill Tav.
(ELNATHAN) E. Hunt 157 Ac. TO NICHOLAS UNDERHILL (134 Ac.)
Race Ground
Bl. Sm. Shop
Jac. Cortright 69 Ac.
To Ralph Hammond
JACOB Vermilya 221 Ac.
(ISAAC & THOMAS) Smith 185 Ac.
John Bounds (JOHN BOWNE) 156 Ac.
Jac. Smith (165 Ac.)
Smiths brook
ABIGAIL SHERWOOD A. Sherrard 125 Ac.
(ELISHA) J. Barton (135 Ac.)
Barton
Sherrard
Smith
School
Underhill
(DENNIS) LENT 128 Ac. Jacob Lent 128½ Ac.
F. Underhill (FREDK UNDERHILL) 125 Ac.
(MARY VALENTINE) R. Valentine 76 Ac.
Valentine bridge
(TUCKAHOE)
Lent
Smith
Caleb Smith 130 Ac.
(STEPH SHERWOOD)
(NAM) I. Odel 144 Ac.
River


CITY OF YONKERS
MILE SQUARE
MT. VERNON
Saw Mill River
Brunks River
Toppets Brook
CITY LINE
John Johnson 202 Ac.
(JOHN LAMB)
No 3
Robt Johnson AND (LEWIS ODDEN) 190 Ac
No 1
Cornelius P Low 267 Ac
Robt Reid 141 Ac.
Henry Odel 360 Ac.
Henry Odel
S. Taylor 184 Ac.
I. Lawrance 305 Ac. (210 Ac)
(WARD HUNT) Odel 349 Ac.
Parsonage 107 Ac.
Oakley 29½
Henry Brown 113 Ac.
I. Williams 177 Ac.
Thos. Valentine
Thos. Valentine
Valentine Hill
Jos. Oakley 164 Ac.
S. Berline
J. Farrington
T. Rich 39 Ac
Eliza Rich
A. Archer
Benj Hunt
T. Rich 35 Ac.
Wm. Crawford 202 Ac.
Wm. Crawford
Jesse Hasted 248 Ac.
Benj. Oakley 65 Ac.
Wm. Hyatt 89 Ac.
Taylor 99 Ac.
Jacob Post 313 Ac.
Isaac Post 293 Ac.
Sam^l Lawrance
C.P. Low 53½ Ac.
David Hunt (41 Ac.)
L. Rich 92 Ac.
Mary Merrill 14¾ Ac.
Hunts Bridge
Valentines bridge
Road to Rochester
(BRONXVILLE)
(JOHN)

The map shows John Bounds (Bowne) as the owner of 156 acres, James Smith 165 acres, F. Underhill 125 acres, and R. Valentine 76 acres in the Colonial and Mohegan Heights section. Isaac Odell owned the 144 acres that included the Armour Villa Park area, while L. Hart owned the 154 acres a part of which is now Cedar Knolls and Longvale. In the Lawrence Park West section, I. Lawrence owned 308 acres south of Sprain Brook, while Ward Hunt was the owner of 343 acres between the Lawrence farm and Brunk River, of which Moorelands, Bronx Manor, and the Highlands are now a part. Across what is now Central Park Avenue, S. Taylor owned 184 acres opposite the Lawrence farm, while on the site of the old Grassy Sprain golf course Caleb Smith owned 130 acres. The 128-acre plot north of it, where Roosevelt High School is located, was owned by Jacob Lent. To the west of Colonial Heights, J. Barton owned 135 acres, Thomas Smith 185 acres, and Jacob Vermilyea 221 acres. These farms, while outside the present community borders, were at that time part of the farm area comprising the Turkey Hoe Hills community, as was the historic farm of 125 acres owned by Abigail Sherwood (Sherrard) across Troublesome Brook.

Interesting to note is the size of those old farms, the largest being 343 acres, the smallest 76 acres, while the others were 308, 165, 156, 154, 144, and 125, or a total of 1471 acres. Three hundred acres along the northern and southern boundaries are perhaps technically outside the present Aquehung borders; but the eight farms and their families marked the beginning of the Aquehung community, covering about a thousand acres, and those families were the first legal owners under American control. Those farmers, the first settlers in this section, were sincere, hard-working, law-abiding citizens, seeking a better place in which to live and an honest method of making a living. They, like the Indians before them, were attracted to the rich lands in the valleys, the beautiful streams that watered them, and the scenic hills sur-

rounding the area. They worked hard and long and with some degree of success for their efforts.

It was only natural for such people eventually to desire to hold religious services and erect churches. The first church was built on the Sherwood farm. The second edifice was erected on the John Bowne farm. A Sunday in 1797 can be visualized when the Sherwoods, Smiths, Bownes, Underhills, Valentines, Odells, Harts, Hunts, Lawrences, Taylors, Lents, Bartons, Vermilyeas, Burnetts, Barkers, Cortrights, and others from more distant farms gathered at Sherwood Chapel to worship in the first church built in the area. They traveled by horse, oxcart, wagon, and buggy, while some living near by arrived on foot. Many traveled for hours, carrying their food for a picnic luncheon on the church grounds. And some of this group of sturdy pioneers assembled at St. John's Church, when it was completed on December 24, 1798, for a Christmas party and celebration. Sleighs were at that season probably the best mode of travel.

These churches are historic landmarks today, and their record of achievement down through the years has added an important chapter to the history of the community. Their well-described histories have been entertainingly written for anniversary celebrations; so let them tell part of the community story.

The Asbury Church not only is one of the oldest in the country—177 years—but one with an unusual history, quoted in part as follows, from the church records:

> "The late President Calvin Coolidge ... while dedicating a statue of Francis Asbury which now stands in Washington, D. C. ... declared that Asbury was one of the most influential men in America during the Revolution.... That during this period he, more than any other person, united the colonial settlers in the struggle for civic, personal and religious freedom.
>
> "A citizen of the 'mother' country by virtue of his birth in 1745 at Handsforth, Staffordshire, England, Bishop Francis Asbury worked for a free and independent America because he believed in the essential dignity of man, which does not and

cannot exist without a society that respects the inherent right of a personal, socially responsible freedom. With those convictions, plus unusual vision, courage, energy, and faith, Francis Asbury laid a religious cornerstone in our community 175 years ago upon which the men and women who followed have built a civilized heritage ... the Asbury Church of Crestwood.

"Francis Asbury became a preacher at the age of seventeen. In the year 1771, when he was only twenty-five, John Wesley sent him to America to assist in introducing Methodism to the early colonists. Before sailing he wrote in his journal, 'Whither am I going? To the new world. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No. I am going to live to God and persuade others so to do.'

"How sincerely and strenuously he worked to live up to that stated promise is best illustrated by the annual circuit which he traveled from the Fall of 1771 until his death in 1816. 'From Maine to Virginia, through the Carolinas, wading swamps, swimming rivers, through the mountains of Tennessee, 300 miles back through unbroken wilderness of Ohio, back to New York and to New England, over rough roads, mountainous and difficult.' In the forty-five years of his ministry he traveled on horseback, in carriage, and on foot over 275,000 miles, ministering to pioneer Americans.

"Francis Asbury first preached in this neighborhood in the late Fall of 1771, soon after his arrival in America. The homes that first sheltered his ministry were those of Peter Bonnett, Frederick Devereaux, and Abigail Sherwood. Two years later, under his guidance, a local Methodist society was formed with thirteen original members.

"This early society had many difficulties. During the Revolution the land that is now Westchester County was under the control of the British. A large number of Hessians were quartered here and Asbury was forced to discontinue his visits. But before he departed Asbury said of the people living in this area, 'They both hear and understand the things of God.'

"Peter Bonnett, a consecrated leader, carried on in Asbury's absence. Forced to hide in the hills above White Plains by day, Bonnett risked his life to return at night and help keep the society alive. When peace was restored in 1783, Francis Asbury returned to find the small community still engaged in vital religious activity.

"With young America politically independent, it was natural

The historic Odell House on Cross Street, a portion of which was built in the English Manor era by Isaac Odell, one of the guides for Washington's army.

The old Hart House on Bronxville Road near Palmer Road, one of the original English Manor homes.

A magnificent estate built in 1868 by John T. Waring, who sold it in 1876 to Samuel J. Tilden after the latter lost the Presidential election. It was later bought by Samuel Untermeyer. (Photo by courtesy of H. Armour Smith.)

An early view of Yonkers, showing sailing vessels on the Hudson. At the right is one of the old-time railroad trains. (Courtesy of H. Armour Smith.)

that there should be a move to separate the Methodist Church from England. In 1784, at a conference in Baltimore, this was formally done and Francis Asbury was made the church Bishop. It is interesting to note that as Bishop, one of the first things Asbury did was to establish the conference system which still prevails today.

"Anticipating that the communities which he was visiting would soon be thinking about the erection of church structures, in 1784 Asbury inserted the following statement in the Discipline of the Methodist Society: 'Let all our chapels be built plain and decent, but no more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable. Otherwise, the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yes and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist Discipline, if not our doctrine too.'

"Even though the society in this area continued to grow, it was not until 1797 that the Sherwood chapel was built. The community at the time was in the eastern part of the Philipseborough Manor, but the property upon which the chapel was built . . . the same site as our present church buildings . . . was owned by Moses Sherwood and his wife, Tamer Sherwood. Cost of the property was twenty-five dollars. Silas Crawford, a builder, constructed the chapel. And he built it well, for the structure still stands, having been moved across the street in 1865, where for years it has been known as the 'Davenport home.' The immediate community served by the chapel included parts of Turkey Hoe, New Rochelle, and Eastchester. The population in the immediate area consisted of only a few farms, a school, the Underhill Tavern, and a blacksmith shop.

"Adjacent to the church is a burying ground which contains the mortal remains of most of the church and community pioneers . . . many of those names are still legible on the tombstones. The oldest stone bears the date 1800. For many years a charge of five dollars was made to church members, and a charge of seven dollars was made to strangers and nonmembers for burial in the churchyard. There is no longer space for burial there.

"In 1800 the chapel elected its first Trustees. After the first meeting, there are no accounts of the meetings held until 1818, but from that time on, the minutes were kept with regularity. As a general rule the only business noted was the annual election of two trustees, a clerk, and a secretary. By 1825 the

names of the Underhill and Sherwood families, Abraham Lent, Isaac Barker, Benjamin Husted, and Graham Leviness appear with great frequency.

"In 1827 the appointment of a sexton, or 'Saxon,' is first recorded. The duties were not set forth until 1867, when a list of rules, written on a loose sheet enclosed in the minute book, were adopted by the trustees. One wonders what experience led to the elucidation of these details:

> " 'Fires to be built every Saturday morning or evening as the weather may require. Church to be swept and carefully dusted every week, and in case of extra meetings to be kept in suitable order. Lamps to be taken to the Saxon's room for trimming, and not used the second time without cleaning. Gateway in front of church to be kept in perfect order.
>
> Cushions to be dusted and aired once a month.
>
> Church to be opened whenever requested by Trustees and Saxon to discharge his duties agreeable to their wishes, and with no other compensation for extra meetings (except his salary as agreed upon). Saxon to open church on Wedding or Funeral occasions, by permission of one or more Trustees.'

"In 1835 the local church incorporated as the First Methodist Church of the Town of Yonkers, a corporate name which remained until 1942, when official action was taken to change to the more appropriate name of the Asbury Methodist Church of Crestwood, New York.

"Until 1858 our church was grouped with others of the same denomination in a circuit, and services were conducted by itinerant preachers of the circuit. Each circuit had from two to four circuit riders who were changed annually. But after 1858 this church became an independent station with one regular minister. The Reverend Nathaniel Meade was its first full-time pastor, and it has had a total of twenty-eight pastors in its 177 years.

"The chapel served as a place of worship until 1866, when the present edifice was completed. The new church was dedicated by Bishop Janes on February 20, 1867. The building was completed during the year that Methodism celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in this country. The marble for

the structure came from the Tuckahoe quarries, and construction was supervised by Isaac B. Lent.

. . . . . .

"So once again, after 175 years, our Church is undertaking a program of growth and expansion and construction . . . under the inspired guidance of our youthful pastor, Reverend Clark W. Hunt. The expansion of facilities will be realized over a period of several years, and when completed, will stand as a living memorial to all the men and women who, through all the years, have given so much of themselves . . . their talents and money . . . to build the strong Christian heritage that is ours in the Asbury Church."

It should be remembered that while Crestwood was added to the church name, it is also a section of Yonkers and part of the old Philipse Manor.

The next oldest church is St. John's, and its history also sheds light on the early days of Aquehung and Yonkers 150 years ago. Its history as prepared by the church is quoted, in part, as follows:

"We celebrate this year 1948 the 150th anniversary of the erection of a church building in Colonial Heights, the construction of which was started September 7, 1798 and completed by Christmas of that year. The total cost of construction was 203 pounds, four shillings and eleven pence, the bill being paid in full December 24, 1798, the original of which is one of the treasured possessions of the Church.

"This is a list of the monies paid out for materials for Church at Turkeyhoe. Returns made by John Bowne, December 24, 1798.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2500 shingles @ | 95/ | £11–17–6 | 21 lbs Nails @ 1/3 | 1–6–3 |
| 300 boards | 1/ | 15–0–0 | 2 lbs glue @ 3/ | 6–0 |
| 50 planks | 1/8 | 4–3–4 | 229 brds | 2–5 |
| Cartage & Freight, planks | | 14–0 | 24½ lbs. Nails | 1–6–3 |
| Freight, boards & shing. | | 3–0–0 | putty & glass | 8–14–8 |
| 80 planks @ 2/4 | | 9–6–8 | paint | 9–10–7 |
| 100 boards @ 1/3 | | 6–5–0 | Brads & Nails | 1–6–4 |
| 50 lbs Nails @ 1/2 | | 2–18–4 | Nails, paint & glass | 5–4–2 |
| 2 lbs do @ 1/4 | | 2–19 | Spindle | 1–12–0 |
| 3 galls rum @ 10– | | 1–10–0 | Ball | 8–0 |
| 4 lbs Nails @ 1/3 | | 5–0 | 1 lock | 17–0 |
| 25 lbs Nails @ 1/3 | | 1–8–6 | Bolt | 3–0 |

"The monies paid out for labor on the building:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Joseph Odell | 75 days work | £24–0–0 |
| Benj. Fowler | 30 do do | 15–15–6 |
| Barthol. Smith | 31 do do | 10–1–6 |
| Elisha Williams | 9½ do do | 3–16–0 |
| John Williams | 21 do do | 7–7–0 |
| Johnathan Odell | 3½ do do | 1–1–0 |
| Wm. Devonshire | 7 do do | 1–8–0 |
| Isaac Dickerman | 5 do do | 1–0–0 |
| Thos. Sherwood | 2 do do | 13–0 |
| Lewis Debois | 2 do do | 13–0 |
| Elisha Williams | | 10–16–0 |
| Benj. Fowler | | 3–12–3 |
| Joseph Odell | | 15–14–0 |
| John Bowne, Boarding Workman | | 10–0–0 |
| Frederick Underhill do | | 10–0–0 |

"And the total of all that is £203–4–11. But the best part of it all is that as we stand here today in this new house of God, we have paid all these monies and there is no debt left to plague us! All of which is respectfully submitted by

Your obedent servant
John Bowne

This twenty and fourth day of December 1798.

"Almost simultaneously with the birth of a Nation was the beginning of the present parish, not large in size, but great in the importance of the work it was dedicated to accomplish.

"The Parish was founded in 1789 by the Reverend Elias Cooper, Rector for 27 years of St. John's Church, Getty Square, Yonkers, a few years following the War of the Revolution. The Constitutional Convention which united the original thirteen colonies into the United States of America had been held but two years before. John Adams was then President, having been inaugurated in Philadelphia the year before. Thomas Jefferson was Vice-President. The Right Reverend Samuel Provoost, the first Bishop of New York, was then head of this Episcopal Diocese.

"He began by visiting the neighborhood, holding services at private homes, making the trip on horseback. The Nation was still in its pioneer stage, the country undeveloped, and travelling by land when one was not 'minded to go afoot' was by springless wagon, or oxcart, or horseback.

"The Reverend Elias Cooper was a man of about 40 years of

age, young and ambitious, strongly built and had the marks of decision and firmness. He wears the small clothes of that period with the three-cornered continental hat. He rides well a strong horse with his saddlebags securely strapped. From the time he became Rector of St. John's Church, Getty Square, in 1789 until the day of his death January 16, 1816, the new parish increased under his able leadership.

"Most families were large in those days and the indoor and outdoor work was performed by members of the household. Wool was woven into cloth and the clothing was homemade. Flax was raised which gave the linen for shirts, underwear and tablecloths. The men who helped found the parish were farmers and on Sundays were particular to attend services in their best attire, the coat blue in color with knee breeches and blue woolen stockings. The white linen shirt is ruffled with neckcloth of the same color. His hair is long and falls over the shoulder and he wears a colonial hat. We must not forget the mothers and daughters who also helped to establish a religious body in that neighborhood, as they fully deserve their share of our praise and grateful remembrance.

"Solomon in the thirty-first chapter of the Book of the Proverbs, reminds us of the thrifty housewife of that period when he writes, 'She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hand to the spindle and the hands hold the distaff. She looketh well to the ways of the household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also and he praiseth her.'

"After 9 years of devoted service to the community, the Rev. Elias Cooper had created an expanded interest in things spiritual, so much so that the people became enthusiastic for the erection of a church building.... Mr. John Bowne gave a portion of his land to be used as a site for the erection of a church building and early preparations were made for its construction, which started September 7, 1798.

"The building was about square in form, with frame of hewn timbers and was without cellar. There were no windows in the north side and those in the east and west were of plain glass, seven by nine inches in size, equipped with inside blinds. The interior was without chancel, with a high pulpit against the north wall and low-back pews common in those days. The building was heated by wood with the use of an iron box stove....

"The church became an independent organization following a meeting of the congregation held July 18, 1853. It was then on motion resolved that those present incorporate themselves in communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and that the Church be known in law by the name and title of the Rector, Wardens and Vestrymen of St. John's Church, Tuckahoe, in the Town of Yonkers, in the County of Westchester.

"The meeting then proceeded on motion to choose two church wardens and eight vestrymen and on being carried, the following persons were duly elected Wardens:

John Bowne and Christian Dederer

Vestrymen:

| | |
|---|---|
| Elias C. Bowne | John A. Hammond |
| Caleb Fowler | William H. Dederer |
| Benjamin Lent | Abijah J. Morgan |
| Peter U. Morgan | Benjamin Vermilyn |

"The same day the following resolution was presented and adopted:

"That the Reverend Charles Jones be elected Rector of St. John's Church, Tuckahoe, N. Y., and that he be granted the use of the parsonage buildings and glebe attached to said Church, at a salary of Four Hundred Dollars for two years. We must remember that in 1853 it was still a country neighborhood with large farms and a few houses. The country parson was expected to be a sort of a farmer, so with the use of a parsonage and glebe, the salary was considered sufficient for the support of himself and family.

"The first endowment received by the Church was a sum of $3,000 from the estate of Elias Cooper Bowne, elected a Vestryman July 18, 1853. It was stipulated in the will that the interest therefrom be applied regularly to the Rector's salary. The money was invested at 6% and for years earned $180.00 annually.

"About 1897 Richard Thompson, Vestryman, presented to the Church a carriage stop of Tuckahoe white marble and while its use is no longer necessary, it remains at its original location at the front of the Church. For many years parishioners living some distance from the Church had the use of a carriage shed located at the southeast corner of Underhill Street and Grandview Boulevard.

"From its erection as a mission chapel in 1738 to the present

time, St. John's Church, Colonial Heights, as a parish has always been a quiet and steadying influence to the community. Many are the prayers that have been offered with tear-stained faces within its hallowed walls. Many happy couples have been blessed in Holy Matrimony within its sacred confines. Many too down through the ages have known and felt 'the peace that passeth all understanding' while they joined in worship."

These church histories clearly disclose conditions as they were, not only in the Aquehung area but in Yonkers. They give a good idea of the habits and activities of the people of the Revolutionary War period and the era that followed.

The cost of the land for the Asbury Church is noteworthy, and the bill for the construction of St. John's is of historical interest. An arresting and dramatic story could be built around the old invoice: the "shingles, boards and the nails" and where they came from; "cartage and freight," from whence and along what routes, perhaps by oxcart or wagon over the Western Trail from Philipsburgh and the Hudson, since there were no railroads at the time; "glue, putty, glass, paint," maybe not the kind used today, but satisfactory enough then.

The names of the workmen reveal some of the farmers in the area when a check of the old map is made. Odell worked 75 days for 24 pounds, about $1.60 per day. Other workmen received various wage scales, from $1.00 to $1.75 per day, evidently according to the type of work or skill, while Fowler got $2.60 per day, probably for overseeing the work.

Interesting is the fact that a Benjamin Fowler built St. John's in Yonkers forty-five years earlier, when, as already noted, the pay scale was based on $1.25 per day. Benjamin Fowler was a tenant farmer in the Philipse Manor and bought the farm in the section where Tuckahoe Road and the Putnam Railroad now intersect. Father and son may have erected the two churches. Three gallons of rum perhaps encouraged these workmen when the weather grew colder and may have stimulated a little celebration when the

job was done. There were two workmen, evidently skilled men imported for the job, who lived too far away to travel back and forth daily; one boarded near by with John Bowne, evidently in charge of construction, while the other boarded with Frederick Underhill. The description of the clothing of that period is illuminating; also the minister's salary of $200 per year.

Regarding the Asbury Church, the story of its beginning is revealing, as it reflects the intense desire of the early inhabitants for religious services. Its growth was unusual and the Davenport house is historic. The discussion of the church meetings makes good reading, and so do the duties of the sexton. He doubtless was a busy person and an important man in the early affairs of the church. These church histories arouse a desire for more data on the early life in Yonkers and the wish that more old records were available.

Worthy of note is the fact that while St. John's Church was erected in Philipsburgh in 1752, the Asbury Church in Aquehung in 1797, and St. John's Church in Aquehung in 1798, they were the only churches in Yonkers until 1828. Two of the three churches were located in Aquehung within a half mile of each other.

The following chronological dates show the establishment of the earliest churches in Yonkers prior to the construction of the railroads that opened up the area:

1752 St. John's Episcopal Church—on Broadway, Philipsburgh

1797 Asbury Methodist Church—near the Bronx River, Aquehung

1798 St. John's Episcopal Church—Underhill Street, Aquehung

1828 Methodist-Episcopal Church, North Broadway

1843 The Reformed Church—South Broadway

1848 St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church—South Broadway

With the advent of the railroads and the rapid growth of the town, many additional churches were built. The following is a list of the churches in Yonkers in 1950, one hundred and two years later:

*Baptist*

Calvary Baptist
Community Baptist
Dunwoodie Baptist
First Czechoslovak Baptist
Messiah Baptist
Mount Carmel Baptist
Nepperhan Avenue Baptist
Redeemer Baptist
Warburton Avenue Baptist

*Catholic*

Christ the King Roman Catholic
Holy Eucharist Roman Catholic
Immaculate Conception (Saint Mary's) Roman Catholic
Most Holy Trinity Roman Catholic
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Roman Catholic
Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic
Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic (Nepera Park)
Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic
Saint Ann's Roman Catholic
Saint Bartholomew's Roman Catholic
Saint Casimir's Roman Catholic
Saint Denis' Roman Catholic
Saint Eugene's Roman Catholic
Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic
Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic
Saint Margaret's Roman Catholic
Saint Michael's Ukrainian Greek Rite Catholic
Saint Nicholas of Myra Greek Rite Catholic
Saint Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic
Saint Peter's Roman Catholic

*Christian Scientist*

Christian Science Society
First Church of Christ, Scientist

*Congregational*

West Center Congregational

*Episcopal*

Assyrian–Saint John's Episcopal
Chapel of the Redeemer Episcopal
Christ Episcopal
Saint Andrew's Memorial Episcopal
Saint Augustine Episcopal Church
Saint John's Episcopal
Saint John's Episcopal
Saint Mark's Episcopal
Saint Mary's Episcopal
Saint Paul's Episcopal

*Hebrew*

Congregation Sons of Israel
Congregation Ohab Zedek
Congregation People of Righteousness
Congregation Agudas Achim
Lincoln Park Jewish Center
Temple Emanu-El

*Lutheran*

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran
Emanuel Lutheran
Evangelical Church of Redeemer Lutheran
Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran
Saint John's Lutheran
Saint Mark's Lutheran

*Methodist*

Asbury Methodist
Central Methodist
Church of our Saviour Methodist
First Methodist
Giffee Memorial Methodist
Institutional A.M.E. Zion
Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion
Morsemere Methodist

*Orthodox Catholic*

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic
Saint Mary's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic

*Presbyterian*

Assyrian Presbyterian
Bryn Mawr Park Presbyterian
Dayspring Presbyterian
First Presbyterian
Hungarian Presbyterian
Immanuel Chapel Presbyterian
South Presbyterian
Westminster Presbyterian

*Reformed*

Crescent Place Reformed
Lincoln Park Reformed
Mile Square Reformed
Park Hill First Reformed

*Unitarian*

First Unitarian

*Other Churches*

Bethany Chapel
Church of the Nazarene
Community Memorial
Full Gospel Tabernacle
Salvation Army

* * * *

The old-time taverns of Yonkers not only were historical, but were places of welcome to the few hardy travelers of the day. They should not be forgotten. The early map of 1785

shows only three taverns in Yonkers: Hunt's Tavern in the old Philipsburgh, Reynolds Tavern in Mile Square, and Underhill Tavern in the Tuckaho Hills area. Two were located on the Bronx River and one on the Hudson River; but at that time both Tuckaho Hills and Mile Square were larger than Philipsburgh and traffic was developing along the Bronx River Valley, which also formed the connecting link between the Hudson River and new communities developing on the Long Island Sound shore. The old taverns became places of assembly for the countryside—places of news and gossip.

Philipsburgh had a tavern perhaps as early as 1725, but its name is unknown. In it the Philipses held court and administered the laws of their own promulgation. In 1756 there was Stevenson's Tavern, and in 1783 Hunt's Tavern, which—more or less typical of the others of that era—was a wooden frame house of rough-hewn trees with open beams inside. On the ground floor were the ever popular bar and dining room, where plain, wholesome meals were served, the food supplied mainly from the proprietor's garden. The furnishings were crude, many items being homemade. The second floor contained several bedrooms sparsely furnished, the typical high bed of the period with canopy and drapes being included. Some of the bedding was of straw, but a guest sometimes was given a layer of feathers. Crude homemade candles furnished light. Outside were the familiar watering trough for animals, and the horse shed near by.

The first stagecoach line began operation in 1785 between New York and Albany, causing Hunt's Tavern to become an important stopping-off place where change of horses occurred and where passengers were refreshed or were accommodated for the night. In 1788 the town meetings were held in the tavern in the absence of a public hall. In 1813 it was known as the Indian Queen Inn, and later in turn as the Eagle House and Nappeckamack House. During part of that time the place was commonly referred to as the Stage House. More ox teams than horse-drawn teams were then

seen in Yonkers, but with a growing desire for more speed horses eventually came to the fore.

The Mansion House (Arlington Inn) was built in 1835, and in 1840 came Bashford's Tavern for the water-front trade. These new hostelries seriously affected the business of the older tavern, which was finally removed in 1851 to the northwest corner of New Main Street and Nepperhan Avenue to be made into a tenement house. In later years it met the fate of other landmarks. On its old site, however, Robert P. Getty built the famous Getty House in 1852. It was a marvel of its day, a structure of light-colored brick costing the then fabulous sum of $50,000. The Getty House had a frontage of about 100 feet on Broadway and about 150 feet on New Main Street in the form of an ell. It was opened with a gala celebration, at which 116 ladies presented Mr. Getty with a large flag to wave over his large, luxurious establishment.

By comparison with the taverns of that day the Getty House was a modern hotel. Its many innovations included a separate room for public lectures and concerts, which aroused much interest. For the first time a public tavern or house was competing with church gatherings. This fine hotel was a valuable Yonkers asset, for the newly built railroad brought many visitors, who were agreeably surprised to find here such excellent accommodations. The Getty House was in recent years abandoned as a hotel, but continued as a Getty Square landmark until the old building was razed in 1949.

The pioneer settlers of the old Philipse Manor were sorely handicapped by a lack not only of transportation but also of mail and other forms of communication. It is difficult for today's Yonkersonians, accustomed to fast mail service, who fret over an occasional hour's delay, to realize what that isolation really meant to the early citizens. World news was passed along by the few travelers of the day. Sometimes the news was grossly exaggerated and misquoted. But de-

spite that fact the early Yonkers dwellers received more news than citizens of places located at a greater distance from the port of New York City. The Yonkers area was so strategically situated that northbound travelers were compelled to pass through it.

The first method of communication was negotiated by messengers on foot, or, where possible, by canoe. This meant slow and expensive deliveries. The horse messenger followed, but even that form of delivery required time and effort. Many letters were delivered by travelers as an accommodation when they were going the right way. In due time the first post routes were organized and delivery was made by horse carrier, with saddlebags used for mail pouches; but as the volume of mail increased, a large bag capable of holding a bushel or more of letters was used.

The first letters were merely folded and sealed with wax, the postage either prepaid or paid by the recipient. The amount, depending on size of letter and distance, was written on the back. The carrier on a new route asked the farmers where to leave their letters, and sometimes a hollow tree or rock became the mailbox. The carrier, on his return trip several days or weeks later, would collect the replies to letters previously delivered. Later, as the post routes became better organized, each rider had a certain daily distance to travel to a point where he handed the mailbag over to the next postman. The first regular post route was from New York City to Boston, established in 1672, over which a monthly round trip was made.

A royal patent in 1692 designated Thomas Neale as postmaster of Virginia and other posts of North America. This was the first office recognized. The only post routes on the North American continent in 1704 were those from New York City to Boston and New York City to Philadelphia. The New York postmaster solicited applications for the office of foot post to Albany for the winter of 1730, but for some reason the route was not completed. However, on Decem-

ber 6, 1747, announcement was made in New York that the Albany post would start out on the following Thursday. This route was to serve residents along the present Albany Post Road, including the pioneers of Philipse Manor. From a horse post it became in time a light-vehicle post, to carry more mail with more comfort. Benjamin Franklin became Postmaster General of the colonies in 1775 and soon established a weekly mail service for both winter and summer along the established routes.

The demand for travel accommodations on the post routes resulted in the introduction of stagecoaches to handle mail and passengers. The first coach route to Yonkers and Albany from New York City was established in 1785 at the close of the Revolution, amid great rejoicing. The fare from Yonkers to New York City was usually $1.00, but at times was changed to 50 cents to meet competition by land or water.

The stage left New York on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays about 7:30 A.M., arriving in Yonkers at "dinner time." It was called the "Northern Mail." Letters were carried for 8 cents between New York City and Philipsburgh. Philipsburgh then was a small hamlet with a church, tavern, country store (which also handled mail), and a few small houses of no importance. But ever in the not distant background stood the fine old Manor House.

The township of Yonkers was established in 1788. In the period from that year to 1797 the Philipsburgh citizens waited at the old Hunt's Tavern, unofficial post office, for the arrival of the stage with their mail and papers. There were, in 1789, only seven post offices in New York State, the nearest to the township of Yonkers being in New York City on the south and Fishkill on the north. The Kingsbridge post office was established nearer Yonkers in 1793.

The people of the little community of Philipsburgh, within the township of Yonkers, rejoiced with lively celebrating in the old tavern, when the Government, in 1797, established a post office in their community and designated it as Yonkers.

Alpheus Pierson was the first postmaster, and the first official post office was assigned to his country store. Aaron Vark, who in 1809 was postmaster as well as owner of the store, was the most important man in the area. A small addition to the store was made about 1823 to house the post office. That structure became the first postoffice building in Yonkers.

Things were looking up in Philipsburgh. The stagecoaches were passing through more frequently, travel was becoming heavier, and the mail service was improving. Hudson River boats began to compete with the stages. Finally the railroad was built along the Hudson River in 1848, and this solved the mail and transportation problem. It should be noted that while the post office was officially named Yonkers for the township of Yonkers, the little community continued to be known as Philipsburgh until 1855, when the village of Yonkers was organized—although the names Philipsburgh and Yonkers were used interchangeably during an intervening period of years.

Concerning Aquehung and the valley of the Bronx River the records are not complete, but it seems that the first official mail was delivered by stagecoaches operating on the route between New York, White Plains, and Danbury, Connecticut, along the White Plains Post Road through Eastchester.

A post office was established on March 18, 1820, at the Ward Tavern on the White Plains Post Road at Winter Hill Road, now Tuckahoe, to serve the entire northern area of Eastchester. First it was called the Bronx Post Office, then Bronx River Post Office. At that date the cotton mill in Aquehung had been in operation about fifteen years, and a community known as Tuckaho or Tuckaho Hills had grown up around it. The mail for this Aquehung community, including that for those living on the farms of Aquehung, was left at the Ward Tavern and called for by the local postmaster until the Harlem Railroad was completed in 1844, when

the mail came in by railroad. The post office was then moved from the Ward Tavern nearer the railroad and became known as Tuckahoe, the name adopted by the railroad for its station there.

It was not until 1847, three years after the Harlem Railroad was built through Aquehung-Yonkers, that the use of envelopes and stamps was authorized. Prepayment of postage became compulsory in 1855, when the registry system was organized. Free delivery was established in 1863, and one year later came the money order system. Postal cards were authorized in 1873. Special delivery of mail was introduced in 1885, and mail delivery by carrier was established in 1886. Rural free delivery was begun in 1896; in 1911 the postal savings system was set up, and in 1913, the parcel post system.

The postmasters of Yonkers since the office was established 154 years ago are listed below:

Alpheus Pierson (5–12–1796)
Aaron Vark (10–28–1809)
Thomas O. Farrington (8–11–1841)
John Bashford (8–14–1843)
Esther A. Bashford (5–31–1848)
George L. Andrews (5–28–1860)
William H. Post (4–8–1861)
Levi P. Rose (9–2–1865)
Matthew F. Rowe (4–16–1869)
William Macfarlan (3–23–1881)
Marwin N. Jones (3–3–1883)
Edwin R. Keyes (10–25–1886)
Lillian C. Keyes (11–30–1886)
John Pentreath (6–23–1890)
John G. F. Holden (8–29–1894)
Henry Osterheld (5–24–1898)
John N. Parsons (9–7–1905)
Nathan A. Warren (1–25–1910)
John N. Parsons (3–30–1914)
Michael J. Walsh (3–22–1917)
James J. Fleming (2–1–1919) Acting
James J. Fleming (8–5–1919)
Albert C. Bogert (8–6–1923) Acting
Albert C. Bogert (4–2–1924)
William Cronin (3–31–1936) Acting
William Cronin (6–20–1936)

The current Yonkers mail service is discussed in the latter part of Chapter 9, "What Are Yonkers?"

The years from 1785 to 1800 represented the Recovery Era. The people, having passed through a destructive war, were faced with the problem of reconstruction. The prospect of

owning their own farms aroused much excitement, as well as some doubt about being able to secure the money with which to buy them. Since Aquehung was still a small farming section far removed from the main waterways, the citizens faced a difficult program. Recovery depended largely on the willingness of the people to work and availability of necessary materials. Even more pressing were the problems of food, clothing, and places to live. From sunup to sundown the sturdy pioneers plodded industriously to rebuild farms, grow needed food and forage, and make clothes by hand. By nightfall the weary laborers were ready to retire early, and by daybreak they were eager to begin work again. Eventually, homes were constructed, barns erected, and fences rebuilt. In their enthusiasm over new-found freedom, the citizens built well on a solid foundation of courage and hard labor. It is surprising that in so busy an era they had time to think of other things, such as schools and churches.

# 8

# *From Acres to Lots*

THE first medical doctor in the Yonkers area was John Ingersoll, well known from King's Bridge to White Plains. He was born in 1745 and moved about 1800 to a house on Tuckaho Road in Yonkers, reported by Allison to be several hundred feet southeast of the Pumping Station near Grassy Sprain Road. Whether he resided in the old house, now a tavern, or in some near-by place, is unknown, but the stories about him are legion. Allison says:

> "His practice obliged him to ride from King's Bridge to the outskirts of White Plains, and he would encounter the darkest night and most pitiless storm rather than neglect his duty at the bedside of a patient. Until inebriety conquered him, he was a fairly successful physician. He was especially favored in some cases, but his surgery is recorded to have been unskillful —probably by reason of lack of training in that department. He died in 1827 of delirium tremens."

Twenty-five square miles or more was a large territory to cover on horseback over mountainous trails, but in those days there were only about one hundred families in all Yonkers and they were on widely separated farms. From old records it seems the usual charge made by a doctor at that time was fifty cents for a professional call and one dollar for a long-distance case. The families of Aquehung doubtlessly received prompt attention, since the doctor lived near by—particularly so if they could find him at home. Incidentally, the lancet was the most important instrument for a doctor to carry, since a little bloodletting in the spring was a popular

cure-all. Surgery at that time was a painful ordeal. Not until 1848 was the first patient given an anesthetic.

The homesites of the original eight farms of Aquehung are shown on the 1785 map, except the Bowne and Lawrence farms. Whether these families had not yet built their homes or were inadvertently omitted is not known. The Smith and Underhill homes were on opposite sides of the old road, now Underhill Street, while the Valentine home was on Bronx River Road, now Scarsdale Road. The Hunt residence was on Bronx River Road (Bronxville Road) about one thousand feet east of the present Kimball Avenue. These original houses have disappeared, but the old sites are easily located.

The home of the owner of the old Hart farm also was on the old Bronx River Road. The old house at what is now 243 Bronxville Road is owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Burnham and appears to be on the original site as shown by the 1785 map. The entire house is old, but the rear portion, or ell, dates farther back and may have been the original house constructed. It has a rare old Dutch oven, a large fireplace, with the swinging iron "gate" for cooking over the fire, with warming ovens on each side, located in a room evidently used for the kitchen, dining room, and sitting room. Beneath it is a cellar room with a dirt floor, probably used for storage of garden and farm equipment.

At the north side of this combination room is a basement room, properly floored with iron hooks in the ceiling suggesting that the room was used for hanging meat and for storage of fruits, vegetables, and other food. Between these rooms is an old wall, which in later years had been covered over with plaster. A recent remodeling job opened this wall, disclosing its unique ancient construction. Small hand-hewn timbers probably three by four inches in size and thirty-six inches long were laid on top of each other between uprights and were sealed together with a form of plaster made from clay bound together with straw. It made a good wall, for evidently it has been in place for 200 years or more. The

present front of the house also is old, with many features of early construction, particularly the wide floorboards and the old mantels and fireplaces.

A former owner of the house, in 1895, wrote a letter some years later to the *Bronxville Press,* urging the preservation of this landmark. The letter in part is quoted, since it gives some interesting observations:

> "One of the few really old and almost historic landmarks in your near vicinity is in danger of ultimate destruction and I trust ... someone ... will become so interested in the house that it will always be preserved.... I refer to the house on Bronxville Road, almost on the corner of Palmer Avenue.... The front part of this house was built about 1780–85, I think, and the shingles on the sides are still the original ones, nearly four feet long and hand split; but the rear ell was built years and years earlier; it is, in my recollection, about 1645. I may be quite off on my dates, as my remembrances are from data we gathered when we purchased the place 1894—or 5.... As time went on the place changed hands until it was owned by Nathaniel Valentine and was known as the 'Natty Valentine' place when Bronxville was only a tiny village whose most prominent building was the blacksmith shop on the main street and bordered on a marsh noted for certain rare moths and butterflies.
>
> "Either before or after he owned the place ... the house was occupied by the workmen building the Croton Aqueduct to New York, which near there runs the Bronx River Driveway, and they greatly abused it. Later, it was the house of a tenant farmer whose large family of youngsters did it no good either; and whose idea of color was highly magnified, as we found the flutings and columns of the beautiful colonial mantels picked out in alternate pinks and greens and blues....
>
> "In 1892 the late Hon. Jefferson Levy, Congressman from New York, and who owned 'Monticello,' President Thos. Jefferson's home in Virginia, together with many of the best physicians of New York bought all that tract of land later known as Cedar Knolls, including this old house, and laid out the land as a development, the roads being named for some of the nationally known surgeons among them—but the money panic of 1893 ruined their project.... It was at that time we bought the

house, which was slated then for demolition because it was so 'old and plain.' At that time the front was a dingy white but the other three sides were a pink 'whitewash.' We had an Italian man and half-grown boy scrape the entire exterior with boat shingles. . . .

"In front was a lovely old grey stone retaining wall topped with a sweet old-fashioned pink rose bush which I nursed."

This letter mentioned that the front part of the house was built about 1780–85 and the ell much earlier, possibly 1645. It seems safe to assume, however, that the ell was not built in 1645, as this location was in the center of the Indian country at that time. It might have been built in 1745, when a few settlers were beginning to drift into the interior of Westchester as the Indians began to leave in 1700. It could have been built a few years earlier, but hardly before 1700.

The comments about the early Bronxville are interesting, and also the details of the old house at that time. The reference to workmen on the Croton Aqueduct is evidently confused with the construction of the Bronx River Pipe Line built in 1884. The house is a treasure in the community. It is hoped that more data can be located to substantiate the exact date of its construction and more of its history, and that it can be preserved for posterity.

The original Isaac Odell home on the old 1785 map was located approximately at 51 Cross Street, then a portion of the old Bronx River Road. The house now there is believed to be either the ancient residence or a portion of it. It is owned at the present time by Nicholas Dyruff. It is believed to have been built before 1785, but the exact date is unknown. Isaac Odell was a tenant farmer who rented from the English Manor before the Revolution and lived on this farm. On May 15, 1786, he bought the 144-acre farm, including a house, for £727 4s from the state after it had been seized from the British.

According to Shonnard, Isaac Odell of Yonkers was one of the celebrated guides for the American forces during the Revolution. These guides, according to early records, not

only guided the American armies in their hit-and-run warfare with the British, but helped find quarters for the men and forage for the animals, and carried important orders from post to post. In the list of famous Westchester guides are Isaac or Uk Odell and Martin Post of Yonkers.

The old farm holds much history, and the house is a community landmark which should be preserved for posterity, not only for itself, but as the possible original home of a famous American. The place contains many interesting features of the construction of those days, including some of the old plastering made from a certain type of clay. The fireplace in the dining room has an offset chimney with a swing to the right and a flue large enough for one to climb through. The dining-room floor is laid on tree trunks, which in turn rest on walls of stone and slag about two feet thick. The floor is made of planks about two feet or more in width. The hand-hewn cellar beams are in excellent condition. Hand-quarter-split roof rafters, chiefly of peg construction in lieu of nails, form the roof. The side walls of the living room are of two-inch-thick oak planking laid up and down. Hand-split oak lath is laid across, and the plaster is of a form of mud and clay that has proved its worth for many years. The lath is fastened on with square-headed nails. The side wall of the cellar stairs is constructed of trees split in half and mitered by hand at the ends to tie it to the corner upright posts. This type of construction certainly goes back to pioneer days. It is believed that all or part of this structure was the original Odell House, that might have been built as early as 1725 to 1750.

Those owning property in Aquehung and Yonkers today have at one time or another waited for a title guarantee of the deed, or until the title had been checked. The title to each plot of land in this area is based on the seizure of the land by the State of New York from Philipse. After seizure the state sold the land in farms of various sizes and guaranteed the validity of the title. The state thus gave a clear

title to each farm, and all deeds since then have been based on that guarantee, the first American ownership, rather than on a title going back to purchases from the Indians or to ownerships previous to the seizure. Accordingly Yonkersonians, by referring to the old map of 1785, can determine who possessed the first title to their property by locating the original farm of which their plot was a part.

The present owner of the Isaac Odell House has furnished a copy of the original deed to the Odell farm. It is shown here as one of the historical documents of Aquehung and Yonkers. It is of particular interest to those now owning part of the old farm, largely the Armour Villa Park area and a small portion of Mohegan Heights. But it is also interesting to all residents of Yonkers, because a similar document was issued giving title to the other farms in the Yonkers area.

The wording of the old deed is alluring and the boundaries of the farm rather indefinite, except the eastern boundary along the river. In time, however, the lines undoubtedly were surveyed or legally determined. The copy of the original deed is shown complete, as well as the deed covering the second sale. Also shown is the method of proving the authenticity of the old signatures, since the second deed was not recorded for many years. It is evident from the names in these deeds that members of the families on the adjoining farms intermarried and in some instances family names became first names. From names on the old map and in old records it can be inferred that Biblical names were quite popular at the time.

There are several old houses in the community, in the Colonial Heights and Armour Villa areas in particular, which have belonged to prominent families responsible for much of the growth of the region. Some are more than one hundred years old. But only two of the original houses of the English Manor days are left in Aquehung.

Copies of the Odell farm deeds are shown on the following pages.

Copy of deed recorded in the office of the Land Commissioner of Westchester County in Liber 402 of Conveyances at Page 21

COMMISSIONERS OF FORFEITURE TO ISAAC ODELL. MAY 18, 1786

THIS INDENTURE MADE THE 18th day of May in the tenth year of the independence of the State of New York and in the year of our Lord 1786

Between Isaac Stoutenburgh and Philip Van Cortlandt Esquires, Commissioners of Forfeiture for the Southern District of the said State appointed in pursuance of an act of the legislature of the said State entitled "An act for the speedy sale of the confiscated and forfeited estates within this State and for other purposes therein mentioned," passed the twelfth day of May One Thousand Seventy Hundred Eighty Four; of the one part, and

Isaac Odell of the County of Westchester, farmer; of the other part:

Witnesseth:—That the said Isaac Stoutenburgh and Philip Van Cortlandt, Commissioners as aforesaid, by virtue of the power and authority to them in and by the said act granted and for and in consideration of the sum of Seven Hundred and Twenty Seven Pounds Four Shillings lawful money of the said State to them in hand paid by the said Isaac Odell, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have granted, bargained, sold, enfeoffed and confirmed and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, enfeoff and confirm unto the said Isaac Odell and to his heirs and assigns;

All that certain farm of land, situate, lying and being in the Manor of Philipsburgh and County of Westchester, bounded northerly by lands now or late in the possession of Frederick Underhill and Reuben Valentine; easterly by Bronx River; southerly by land now or late in the possession of Eleanor Hart; and westerly by lands now or late in the possession of Caleb Smith and Isaac Lent; Containing one hundred and forty four acres more or less as the same is now possessed by the said Isaac Odell, forfeited to the People of the State by the attainder of Frederick Philipse late of the said County, Esquire; and all and singular, the estate, right, title and interest, whether in possession, reversion or remainder of, in or to the said premises which in consequence of any conviction or attainder is become forfeited or attached to or vested in the People of the said State. To have and to hold, all and singular the said premises hereby granted, bargained, sold, enfeoffed and confirmed, with the appurtenances, unto the said Isaac Odell and to his heirs and assigns to the only proper use, benefit and behoof of the said Isaac Odell and his heirs and assigns, forever.

In Witness Whereof the parties to these presents have thereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Th^s Stagg Jun^r | Isaac Stoutenburgh | (L.S.) |
| John Stoutenburgh | Ph V Cortlandt | (L.S.) |

Be it remembered that on the 26th day of June in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred before me William Miller one of the Judges of the Court of Common pleas in and for the County of Westchester, personally came Philip Van Cortlandt, to me known to be one of the persons described in and who executed the within deed and acknowledged that he executed the within deed as his voluntary act for the use and purpose therein mentioned. I have inspected the within deed and finding no interlineations or erasures do allow the same to be recorded

Wm Miller

A true copy of the original deed and acknowledgement thereof recorded February 16, 1859 at 30 Mins Past 2 oclk P.M.

John P. Jenkins, Register

Deed covering second sale of Odell Farm on June 15, 1819, by the heirs to Valentine Odell, 33 years after the original purchase. This deed was not recorded until March 22, 1859, or 40 years after the sale.

LIBER 406 OF CONVEYANCES AT PAGE 26

HEIRS OF ISAAC ODELL TO VALENTINE ODELL. JUNE 15, 1819

This Indenture made the 15th day of June in the year 1819 between Seymour Jarvis and Isabella his wife of the Town of Stamford, in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut; Noah Underhill and Elizabeth, his wife, of the Town of Eastchester, in the County of Westchester and State of New York and Mary Odell of the Town of Yonkers, in the County and State last mentioned, all the above said persons the heirs of the late Isaac Odell of the Town of Yonkers in the County and State last mentioned, deceased, of the first part, and

Valentine Odell of the Town of Yonkers, in the County of Westchester and State of New York, of the second part;

Witnesseth:—That the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof acknowledged, hath bargained, sold, remised and quitclaimed and by these presents doth bargain, sell, remise and forever quitclaim unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever of us or either of us the said parties of the first part now have or might have in the land and tenements of our late father Isaac Odell, Deceased, lying in the Town of Yonkers, County and State aforesaid, whereof he died possessed together with all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances thereto belonging or appurtaining and also all the stock and farming utensils whereof our said father died

possessed and also all the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand, whatsoever, of them, the said parties of the first part, either in law or equity, of, in or to the above bargained premises and every part and parcel thereof to the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns to the sole use, behoof and benefit of the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns forever.

In witness whereof the parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sealed and delivered in | Seymour Jarvis | (L.S.) |
| the presence of | Isabella Jarvis | (L.S.) |
| Nathaniel Valentine | Noah Underhill | (L.S.) |
| Thomas Valentine | Elizabeth Underhill | (L.S.) |
| | Mary Odell | (L.S.) |

Westchester County) SS

On the 23rd day of March A.D. 1859 before me personally came Mary Odell to me known to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing conveyance and she acknowledged that she executed the same.

Carleton Palmer
Justice of the Peace.

State of New York }
Westchester County } SS

Method used to prove validity of the signatures on the deed covering the second sale of this Odell property. This portion is attached to the second sale deed to Valentine Odell.

On the 30th day of March, 1859 before me personally came Isaac O. Underhill, to me known, who being by me duly sworn and the within conveyance being shown to him, did depose and say that he knew all the parties described in said conveyance; that Noah Underhill therein described was the father of him the said Isaac and Elizabeth Underhill also therein described was his mother. That at the date of said conveyance they resided in the Town of Eastchester and County of Westchester; that the said Noah died on or about the 8th day of March, 1840 and the said Elizabeth about the 20th of September 1832, that he the said Isaac knows the handwriting of his said father and mother and that the name Noah Underhill subscribed to the within deed is in the handwriting of his said father and the name Elizabeth Underhill also subscribed to said deed is in the handwriting of his mother and both signatures are genuine.

W. W. Robertson
Westchester County Judge

State of New York) }
County of Westchester) } SS

On this 16th day of February, 1859, before me personally came Elijah Valentine, to me known, who being by me duly sworn, and the within conveyance being shown to him, did depose and say that he knew all the parties therein described, that he was well acquainted with Nathaniel Valentine and Thomas Valentine, the witnesses to said conveyance, whose names are thereto subscribed and with the handwriting of each of them, that the said Nathaniel was his father and the said Thomas was his uncle, that at the date of said conveyance the said Nathaniel resided in the Town of Yonkers and the said Thomas in the town of Eastchester, Westchester County, that the said Nathaniel died about the 26th of January 1838 and the said Thomas on the 16th of September 1839, that he the said Elijah has frequently seen the said Nathaniel and Thomas write and was well acquainted with their handwriting and that their several names subscribed to the execution of the within deed is in their proper handwriting and that the said Elijah now resides in the said Town of Yonkers.

W. W. Robertson
Westchester County Judge

State of Connecticut }
County of Fairfield } ss

I, Joshua B. Jarvis, Commissioner for the State of New York, residing in Stamford, Fairfield County. That on the 26th of February 1859 before me came Isabella Jarvis (she acknowledged etc.) and being duly sworn deposes and says knew Seymour Jarvis, that he was her husband, died 4th of October 1843 saw him sign, it is in his handwriting etc.

Joshua B. Ferris
A commissioner for the State of New York.

Certificate of
Secretary of State of New York
as to Commissioner Ferris attached

A true copy of the original deed and the acknowledgements thereof recorded April 7, 1859
John P. Jenkins
Register

It is sincerely hoped that some steps can be taken in Yonkers for the preservation of the old Manor houses still standing. They are of historical value, and the wheels of progress should slow down enough to enshrine them in their present locations. It is important to locate and prove their authenticity before the old records, if still available, are lost. They

could be preserved as community libraries and historical centers.

It seems currently impossible to trace the exact age of a house built prior to 1785. Up to that year all the land was owned by the English and was under the control of Philipse by Royal Patent. All houses or other improvements either were under the Manor ownership or built and possessed by the tenant farmer on some tenant-lease or owner-possession basis. Any agreement, however, was necessarily with Philipse, and if records were made they have not been located to prove the ownership or the date of construction. Some of the old homes in the Manor began as small cabins or cottages, being expanded later according to the requirements of the family; but unfortunately most of the old Manor houses have disappeared.

When the state seized Philipse Manor, the legislature ordered that preference be given the tenant farmers in purchasing their farms. If the Manor owned the house and improvements, all were sold with the farm and no complications arose. But if the tenant owned the improvements and was unable to finance the purchase of the land from the state, then complications arose which had to be adjusted.

It is interesting to compare the £5 per acre paid for the 144-acre Odell farm with the £8 per acre paid for the adjoining 125-acre Underhill farm. Apparently there was very little choice in the type of the land, so the buildings must have made up for the difference in value. The prices paid for other farms in Philipse Manor are also worth noting. Thomas Valentine, previously mentioned as buying his 238 acres including Valentine Hill, paid £10 per acre. Peter Forshee, for his 170 acres, now part of the Hudson River Golf Course, paid £8 per acre. Benjamin Fowler, for 305 acres on Saw Mill River at Tuckahoe Road, paid £7 per acre.

One commentator, writing about these values, observes that they were exceedingly high for farm land and only the nearness to Manhattan markets would encourage such prices.

However, some improvements such as houses, barns, and fences often were included in the price.

While discussing land values, it has been estimated that Westchester County, an area of 457 square miles (292,480 acres), was bought from the Indians for about 1½ cents per acre, the estimated value of all the goods exchanged with them. On that basis the tract of 11,200 acres in Yonkers was bought for less than $200, while the 1000 acres in the Aquehung community cost a total of about $15.00. Accordingly, Aquehung had increased in value in about one hundred years from 1½¢ to $25.00 per acre, and from a total value of $15.00 to $25,000. The latter figure is reached by using an average price for the farms of £7 per acre, of which £5 per acre, or $25.00, is used for the land value.

Today's land value in Aquehung is difficult to compare with that in those days, because of the extensive improvements made in the modern community equipped with streets, sidewalks, sewerage, water, terraces, and many other facilities not then available. Depending on the location and other conditions, an acre of land, without buildings, might vary from five to twenty thousand dollars now. With an apartment-house improvement, it could be valued as high as $1,000,000.

Yonkers real estate based on assessed valuation for 1950 was worth about $370,000,000, which means that the average valuation per acre for improved and unimproved property is about $33,000. Figuring on that basis, Aquehung would be valued at about $33,000,000 with improvements. However, the actual value of Yonkers property is considerably higher than the assessed value. The estimated 1949 value of all land and buildings in Westchester County was approximately $1,600,000,000, or an average of about $5500 per acre with buildings and improvements. Thus it is seen that the average value of an acre in Yonkers is about six times that of the average value in Westchester County, of which Yonkers is a part. Location, concentration, type of buildings, and many other considerations determine these values. Three

hundred and eleven years after the Indians sold Yonkers to the Dutch for about $200 in beads and trinkets, it is now worth, with land and improvements, somewhere around $400,000,000. One might ponder what the next three hundred years will bring, for this is a valuable location in an exceedingly strategic metropolitan area lying between two historic rivers. Will the land area continue to be dotted with fine homes, or will it eventually become a mass of steel, concrete, and brick?

Since Yonkers adjoins New York City, it is worthy of note that the Dutch, in 1626, paid the Indians only $24.00 for Manhattan Island with its 22,000 acres, or ⅛¢ per acre. The value of Manhattan today has been estimated at over $19,000,000,000, or about $850,000 per acre with improvements. Another comparison reveals that while Yonkers, in 1785, had 64 farms or separate parcels subject to tax, in 1949 it had an estimated 46,000 separate parcels on which separate tax bills were rendered. Of these about 23,000 parcels are unimproved, without houses or buildings, while about 23,000 are improved. There are other parcels within the city limits not taxed, but the figures are not available at this time. About 50,000 tax bills were rendered in 1950. This is not, however, a detailed study of the situation, so a matter of a few parcels one way or the other is immaterial. The figures do show the growth of Yonkers and a general comparison of 64 parcels, a hundred houses, and a few hundred people in 1785, with probably 50,000 parcels, about 25,000 buildings, and 152,533 people in 1950.

Aquehung had, in 1785, eight farms or parcels subject to taxation, about a dozen houses, and a population of about forty people, estimating an average of five persons on each farm. Today, Aquehung has approximately 1300 houses and 25 apartment buildings, with possibly 200 to 300 unimproved parcels, or a possible total of 1500 taxable parcels. There are about 1550 apartments in the 25 buildings, which, together with the 1300 houses, gives a total of about 2850 homes in the community. If an average of 3.28 persons per

home was used as a figure, there would be a population of about 9300. There are no actual figures on Aquehung available, so these estimated figures have been mentioned merely to furnish a general comparison between the past and the present.

The geographical center of Aquehung is somewhere near the intersection of Pondfield Road West and Bronxville Road, the old Aquehung Junction; and the population center is near the same point.

Average figures and estimates can become interesting, whether or not they prove anything. Using a Yonkers population of 152,533 and a real estate valuation of $370,000,000, they show the assessed real estate value of Yonkers to be over $2400 per person, while in 1810 there were 1200 people owning a combined valuation of $400,000, or $330 per person. But those 1200 people owned an average of about 10 acres each, or 430,000 square feet, while today 152,533 people own an average of about 1/14 of an acre, or 3000 square feet. The trend from acres to lots still continues.

Historical interest lies in the fact that while Yonkers land was sold in 1785 for about $25 per acre, the United States Government, in 1803, eighteen years later, paid France only $15,000,000 for New Orleans—a city then of 8000 inhabitants—and the entire Louisiana Purchase of 1,000,000 square miles, or 640,000,000 acres. The value of the huge deal was based on only 2½¢ an acre. That would indicate that land in Yonkers in 1803 was worth about 1000 times more than the Louisiana Purchase. History was repeating itself, for Napoleon of France, like the Indians of Yonkers, had more land than he needed, and evidently decided that $15,000,000 would buy many trinkets. Sixty-four years later land was still cheap in the opinion of the Russians, because, in 1867, they sold to the United States Alaska with its 586,400 square miles, 375,496,000 acres, for $7,200,000, or less than 2 cents an acre. That great northwestern territory has become exceedingly important to the future plans of this nation and is currently the subject of lively discussion. Future planning

would necessarily have to be different if the United States did not own Alaska with its vitally strategic location. The money cost of assembling the present area of the United States and its possessions, 2,257,990,400 acres, was an average of about 5 cents an acre.

Today the population of Alaska is about 150,000; so there is a great deal of vacant space in that important area, with only one person for each 2500 acres. If Alaska becomes a state, it will supersede Texas as the largest state, being more than twice its size. Yonkers has about 14 persons per acre, New York City about 40 per acre. Some other approximate figures are presented here as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| The United States (Continental) | 1 person for each 12 acres |
| Canada | 1 " " " 180 " |
| The United Kingdom | 1 " per 1.2 acres |
| India and Pakistan | 1 " " 2.5 " |
| Japan | 1 " " 1.1 " |
| Belgium | 1 " " .9 " |
| The World | 1 " " 16. " (land surface only) |

The world has an estimated 36,800,000,000 acres of land surface and 89,000,000,000 acres of water surface, the latter surface being approximately 40 acres per person. It is disconcerting to find only 4,000,000,000 acres of arable land left in the world—one ninth of the total area—and much of it not readily accessible. That is only 1.4 acres per person.

Erosion continues all over the world as forests and thickets disappear with the spread of civilization; but in Yonkers the famous terrace gardens are helping to keep the land surface in place and preserve the area for future generations. It is apparent, however, that there has been turned over to parks and parkways a lot of fertile land along the rivers, land that formerly comprised the choice acres of the successful farming area hereabouts. The trend continues from acres to lots.

A familiar sight to all Yonkersonians—the water tower atop the famous Nodine Hill.

A beautiful spot in the Crestwood section, at the intersection of Crestwood and Pennsylvania Avenues.

The approximate geographical center of Yonkers, where Halladay Avenue joins Mile Square Road.

# 9

## "What Are Yonkers?"

THE Provincial Congress at White Plains ratified the Declaration of Independence in July, 1776, but until 1787, when the government of the United States formed by the Convention of 1787 became operative, New York was an independent sovereign state, so acknowledged by the British Treaty of Peace of 1783. As such, the state legislature on March 7, 1788, divided it into sixteen counties, one of which was Westchester. On the same date Westchester was divided into twenty-one towns. One of these was Yonkers, the boundaries of which were set at that time approximately as they are now—except for the Kingsbridge area, which was later added to New York City.

According to Allison, in 1788 the population of Yonkers was not over one thousand, including slaves, while in 1790 an official census disclosed the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Heads of families | 152 |
| Free white males—16 and over | 265 |
| Free white males—under 16 | 220 |
| Free white males—including heads of families | 458 |
| All other free persons | 12 |
| Slaves | 170 |
| Aggregate total | 1125 |
| More males than females | 27 |

In this census report females were not listed, probably because they had no voting rights. However, if the figures can be interpreted correctly, the town had 458 free white females

or 27 less than the number of males. In the year 1790 the population of Westchester County was only 24,003, with 390 more males than females, and 1419 slaves. As a comparison, Albany had a population of 3506, New York City about 24,000, New York State 340,000, and the nation 3,929,214.

The population of Yonkers in 1800 was 1176, of which only 175 were taxable persons. By 1810 there were 204 taxable persons, of whom only 93 could vote. The property value of Yonkers was estimated at $400,000. The population in 1814 declined to 954, owing to the War of 1812 with England. In 1825 the population was 1621 and the taxable persons were only 249. During the next few years not much happened in the town of Yonkers. It remained sparsely settled, an area of farms largely owned by the farmers or their descendants who had originally bought the land after the Revolution. The population remained small until 1844, when the Harlem Railroad, as explained later, was built along its eastern boundary through the Bronx River Valley; and in 1848 the Hudson River Railroad was constructed along the Hudson River.

The Hudson River Railroad began operation—as a single-track line—on September 29, 1849. A newspaper announcement proclaimed that it would begin operation between New York and Peekskill, the fare to Manhattanville being 12½ cents and to Yonkers 25 cents. A schedule listed trains to start from New York at 8 A.M., 12 noon, and 4 P.M. Stockholders could ride free of charge for the first week. The railroad ended the stagecoach route through Yonkers. However, it was a mere toy when compared with the high-speed double-track road along the Hudson today.

After the opening of the railroad the real growth of Yonkers began, and by 1850 the value of the property was estimated at $1,275,809. About that time the following communities, later to prove of more than passing interest to Aquehung and Yonkers, began to develop beyond the eastern boundary: Bronxville, Mount Vernon, and Tuckahoe. Until

that time the citizens of Yonkers had been dependent on newspapers from New York or elsewhere, but in 1852 the *Yonkers Herald* was established as the first newspaper in the town, which then claimed 537 buildings within its limits.

Early Yonkersonians, from the days of the Indians, the Dutch, the English, and the first Americans, passed through the stages of the development of artificial light. Many Yonkersonians can still remember the kerosene lamp and the beautiful models hung from the ceiling which could be pulled down and pushed back at will. Rooms equipped with these handsome light fixtures became throne rooms.

From the beginning of time man has been given the light of day by which to work and progress and has been covered with the darkness of night to encourage rest and recuperation to preserve the human race. The old adage "early to bed and early to rise" expressed the activities of the race in generations past. "Sunup to sundown" was the active period through the dark ages and, as planned, the world progressed and waxed "healthy, wealthy, and wise."

From the very beginning, man has desired more light. His intense longing to overcome darkness has led to discoveries which have turned night into day and created a new world in which to live. Only time will tell whether man will use these discoveries for the benefit of the human race or whether turning night into day will eventually prove a fallacy and his undoing. Some have already found that they cannot reverse the old formula with impunity. One cannot "burn the candle at both ends" or turn the rest period into play or work. Even more uncertain will be the effect, on the human race and the future world, of the resultant discoveries following the development of artificial light.

One must go back to mythology, when Prometheus "stole fire from heaven to give it to man," to find the beginning of the era of artificial light. In ancient days the campfire and the torch were all that dispelled the shadows while sometimes offering protection against wild animals. The era of

candles and lamps showed that man was seeking more light and using his ingenuity. One could almost believe that the firefly, or lightning bug, was sent from on high to a world groveling in darkness to demonstrate to inactive minds that artificial light could be created, bottled up, and turned on and off at will.

In the abundance of light available today, Yonkersonians will find it difficult to believe that it was only ninety-six years ago, after the coming of two railroads to Yonkers, that gaslights began to brighten the community that then entered upon a new era in its progress, and that it was only sixty-four years ago that the first electric light appeared here.

An enterprising group of citizens, in 1854, inspired by the success of gas illumination in New York City, decided to establish the industry in Yonkers. Thus came into being the Yonkers Gas Light Company, the first of its kind not only in Yonkers, but in Westchester County. During the first year Yonkers, with a meager four miles of gas main, used only 1,000,000 cubic feet of gas; whereas today it has 241 miles of gas main and uses around 2,257,000,000 cubic feet of gas annually. Originally, gas was sold on a "candle power" basis because it was used principally for lighting; but now gas is used chiefly as a fuel and is sold on a calorific or heat-standard basis. Today more than half of all the gas sold in Yonkers is used for space heating.

The earliest list of customers available was for the year 1867, when there were 1072 consumers after thirteen years of operation. The rate was $5.00 per 1000 cubic feet of gas, whereas on January 1, 1950, there were about 44,367 gas customers in the city of Yonkers and the average revenue received for all sales during 1949 was $1.02 per 1000 cubic feet of gas.

Some of the older Yonkersonians may have fond recollections of the gaslight era and the quaint appeal of the early lamplighter who traversed the streets of Yonkers on foot or

horseback to illuminate the growing community with his magic stick. And there also was the gas man who traveled around in his horse-drawn vehicle and used a brick or stone to block the wheel when he stopped at a customer's home.

Yonkers was the first Westchester community to enjoy street lighting. In those early days, after the Yonkers Gas Light Company started, others began business, including the People's Gas Company (1870), the City Gas Company (1872), the Westchester Gas Light Company (1875). These companies were small, operated independently with local capital and each in a separate area. When the plant failed to function properly, it was sometimes hours and even days before service was restored. In 1900 the Westchester Lighting Company was organized, and in 1902 all these companies were merged into it as a single operating unit.

In 1752 Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity. In 1879 Thomas Edison introduced his incandescent lamp or bulb and gave to the world the modern era of electric illumination. Only six years later, in 1886, this wonder light was installed in Yonkers when two companies began operation—the Thomson-Houston Electric Company and the Yonkers Schuyler Electric Company—to serve only business places at first. They were merged in 1896 as the Yonkers Electric Light and Power Company. The village authorities finally granted a franchise and the original companies put up the necessary poles so that on April 20, 1886, electric lamps that "gave a brilliant and glaring light" appeared before several prominent places of business. Included were those at 17 North Broadway and 25 Main Street. One of the first persons to have electricity in his home was Thomas A. Walsh at 121 Palisade Avenue.

Electricity naturally challenged gas as an illuminant. While the electricity industry started out as a competitor of the gas industry, it soon developed that each had its "place in the sun"—electricity for light and power, and gas as an

ideal fuel for cooking, water heating, and house heating. Today these two major industries are developing side by side, each complementing and supplementing the other.

Yonkers has always been in the forefront of things electric. It early became identified with the New York Edison System, one of the largest in the world. Yonkers continues today to be important as a link joining two of the country's great electrical systems, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York City and the Niagara-Hudson Power Corporation of upstate New York. In addition to these two main sources of electricity, Yonkers contains also a third source of power in the generating station at Glenwood—the only large generating plant in Westchester County. This was formerly owned by the New York Central Railroad. It has a capacity sufficient to care for the needs of a considerable part of the county.

The electric company had about 280 customers in 1900, and until 1910 only a few homes were wired. Now, in 1950, it has about 49,700 meters serving residences and business establishments. There are no actual data on the number of electric-light bulbs in place in all the houses and business establishments in Yonkers. Most Yonkersonians would be surprised if they estimated the number in their houses or apartments and then counted them. The number will vary from forty to fifty in small homes to over one hundred in larger houses. As a guess, Yonkers probably has about 2,000,000 bulbs in place, but hardly more than half are used at any one time.

The peak demand for the city as a whole comes between 5 and 6 P.M. in the winter and between 9 and 10 P.M. in the summer. The lightest load is around 4 A.M., summer or winter. At present there are about 10,400 electric-light poles on the streets of Yonkers, a veritable forest of "embalmed trees" dedicated to the service of humanity. According to the company there are approximately 6900 lamps in use on

the city streets and in public parks, and 441 on the county parkways within the city of Yonkers. These lights are vital to the safety and convenience of the city. Every Yonkersonian, young and old, can take pride in them and do all possible to protect them. The breakage of these lights from week to week by unthinking young Yonkersonians is inexcusable, and parents, by proper explanation to youngsters, can do much to eliminate the hazards of darkness from broken lights and shattered glass on the streets. One estimate is that about 7300 lamps were broken in 1949—more than the number on all Yonkers streets—by vandals or unthinking youngsters. At fifty cents each the damage amounted to a sizable sum, to which was added the labor expense of replacing them.

It was decided, on April 12, 1855, to organize the Village of Yonkers within the Town of Yonkers. The area incorporated covered about 900 acres centered around Philipsburgh and along the Hudson River for about one and seven-tenths of a mile, with a breadth of about eight-tenths of a mile. On that date the population of the town was 7554; taxable persons, 1629; and property valued at $4,290,672. During that period little appears to have been recorded concerning the Aquehung community, which, continuing as a successful farm area, had become comfortably accessible over the Harlem Railroad and was preparing for the rapid growth to follow. The Armour Villa and Colonial Heights sections first began to grow owing to their proximity to the new railroad stations.

About 1850 the Aquehung community, which, for a considerable period of time during the 1800 era, was the largest of the three communities in the Town of Yonkers, gave way to the growing Village of Yonkers, the old Philipsburgh, on the Hudson. By an odd coincidence the Village of Yonkers, with an area of 900 acres, covered about the same ground expanse as the Aquehung community with 1000 acres. The

Village of Yonkers faced the Hudson River and the west and grew with the expanding Hudson River Railroad, while the Aquehung community faced the Bronx River and the east, and developed under the influence of the New York and Harlem Railroad. While not deliberately turning their backs on each other, necessity forced their activities and growth along different lines. In between the two communities lay a beautiful farming and woodland area which, with the building of the Putnam Railroad in 1881, followed by the advent of modern roads, began a phenomenal development. By 1865 the Town of Yonkers had a population of 12,756, about 9000 of which was in the Village of Yonkers.

In 1872 the Village of Yonkers and the Town of Yonkers, including the Aquehung community, were finally incorporated as the City of Yonkers. This consolidation and incorporation, long discussed and delayed several times, was finally encouraged and brought to fulfillment as the result of an attempt made by New York City politicians to absorb the Yonkers area. It was then described as an area of 17½ square miles, with 4⅓ miles lying along the Hudson River on the west, 4 miles along Greenburgh on the north, 6½ miles along the Bronx River on the east, and about 3 miles along the New York City line on the south.

By 1880 the population of the city was 18,891. About that time the first telephone was installed in Yonkers by the Western Union Telegraph Company in its office at No. 1 Getty Square. Alexander Graham Bell secured his patent for the telephone in 1876 and one was in operation in Yonkers not long thereafter. The exact year is unknown, but it was probably 1878 or 1879. The Metropolitan Telephone and Telegraph Company acquired, on June 21, 1860, the telephone property from the Western Union in Yonkers. On that date Miss Adelaide J. Adgate, manager of the Western Union office, became the local Metropolitan manager. As far as known only the one telephone was installed at the time.

The first commercial telephone exchange in the United States was opened in New Haven, Connecticut, on January 28, 1878, and the first in New York State started at Albany March 18, 1878. Early in 1882 the Westchester Telephone Company acquired the telephone and the rights in Yonkers from Metropolitan and proceeded to set up a switchboard four years after the first installation in New Haven. It was the old magneto system, a one-position, two-section type, for approximately 75 lines serving 100 subscribers. Two operators were employed, for day and night service, respectively. The switchboard was crude, switching keys being used for the connection of subscribers. This first central office was very small, using about 15 square feet of the Western Union space, and it continued under the direction of Adelaide Adgate, together with the Western Union Office. The subscribers were furnished with a card listing the call numbers. However, the cards were seldom used, as the subscribers merely asked for the desired name, the operator being familiar with all listed subscribers. The service was slow at times, but the subscribers were friendly and willingly cooperated in making the new venture a success. The telephone then was even more of a novelty than the radio and television were in later years. The equipment, including switchboard and subscribers' stations, required considerable maintenance to keep them in proper working order. The "trouble men" covered practically all the territory on foot.

There is apparently no record of the name and address of the first Yonkers telephone subscriber. It is known, however, that Acker, Edgar & Co., a grocery firm formerly located at Main and Depot Streets, was one of the first, if not the first. Their call number was Yonkers 13. Whether this number was considered lucky and purposely selected by the firm, or whether the first twelve numbers were held back for later special assignment, is not known.

A few of the early Yonkers telephone subscribers were:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Water Board Office | Manor Hall | Yonkers | 1 |
| Armstrong Express | Depot Square | " | 4 |
| R. Eickemeyer | 68 Linden Street | " | 6-B |
| Alexander Smith | Elm Street | " | 9 |
| Peene Brothers | Dock Street | " | 14 |
| Dr. C. A. Benedict | 96 Warburton Avenue | " | 23 |
| Samuel J. Tilden | North Broadway | " | 41 |
| Western Union | 1 Getty Square | " | 51 |
| R. E. Prime | 63 Hawthorne Avenue | " | 92-C |

Some of the first employees, in addition to the manager, were:

C. J. Nergent, *Day Operator*
Harry Benz, *Night Operator*
Jack Watson, *Trouble Man*
Dennis Ryan, *Trouble Man*
William H. Justes, *Installer*
William Schaeffer, *Relief Operator*

The New York Telephone Company acquired the Westchester Telephone Company in 1896, when the telephone system in Yonkers consisted of a three-position magneto switchboard. The central office finally was moved in 1903 to 5 Riverdale Avenue, and a new common battery system with 3100 lines was installed. Current data on the telephone appear later in this chapter.

By 1890 the population of the city had increased to 32,-033. The first mayor of the City of Yonkers was James Courter, who, as a boy, was raised on his grandfather's farm, the Caleb Smith farm, adjoining the Aquehung community. It was one of the important farms in the Aquehung section in 1785, as previously mentioned. The farmhouse stood directly in the center of what is now Central Park Avenue just south of Tuckahoe Road, and was removed when the avenue was laid out.

The city of Yonkers has had a total of thirty-one mayors in the past seventy-eight years. Joseph Masten served a second term after an interval of two years. Two mayors

died in office. One served for five years, and two served for seven years. Yonkers has had one woman mayor, Mrs. Edith P. Welty.

The complete list follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1872–1874 | James C. Courter |
| 1874–1876 | Joseph Masten |
| 1876–1878 | William A. Gibson |
| 1878–1880 | Joseph Masten |
| 1880–1882 | Morton P. Otis |
| 1882–1884 | Samuel Swift, M.D. |
| 1884–1886 | William G. Stahlnecker |
| 1886–1890 | J. Harvey Bell |
| 1890–1892 | James Millward |
| 1892–1894 | James H. Weller |
| 1894–1897 | John G. Peene |
| 1898–1901 | Leslie Sutherland |
| 1902–1903 | Michael J. Walsh |
| 1904–1905 | John E. Andrus |
| 1906–1907 | John H. Coyne |
| 1908–1909 | Nathan A. Warren |
| 1910–1917 | James T. Lennon |
| 1918–1921 | William J. Wallin |
| 1922–1923 | Walter M. Taussig (died in office) |
| 1923–Balance of year | Alfred Watson |
| 1924–1925 | Ulrich Wiesendanger |
| 1926–1927 | William A. Walsh |
| 1928– | Thomas F. Larkin (died in office) |
| 1928–1931 | John J. Fogarty |
| 1932–1939 | Joseph Loehr |
| 1940–1941 | John J. Condon |
| 1942–1943 | Benjamin F. Barnes, M.D. |
| 1944–1949 (September) | Curtiss E. Frank |
| 1949–Balance of year | Edith P. Welty |
| 1950– | Kristen Kristensen |

Within the borders of Yonkers, now over 300 years of age, are many local communities wherein Yonkersonians dwell by choice. It is fortunate that the city covers a wide ex-

panse with varying landscape in its different sections. Some people prefer one part of the city, some another, but all are Yonkersonians working together for the common good. Yonkers is a city of homes, often referred to as the "City of Gracious Living," a community of 152,533 people dwelling together in a cradle of liberty. Community lines mean very little except as areas in which to live; but individuals have a choice of hills, valleys, or streams.

On the west the Hudson River offers water transportation direct to the sea and around the world. Three rail lines furnish land transportation, while highways and parkways are unequaled. Of more than passing interest is the fact that the Putnam Division of the New York Central Railroad, built in 1881, originally was known as "The New York, Boston and Montreal Railway"—an ambitious title. The first elevated railroad in the city of New York was built by Yonkers men. One of these was J. P. Ackerly, who made the first trip himself on a hand-propelled car to demonstrate the possibility of operating "L" trains without falling down into the street. Incidentally, the steel used in the construction of that first elevated road on Ninth Avenue was sold to Japan when the "L" structure was demolished, and much of it probably was returned to America in the outrageous attack on Pearl Harbor.

Yonkers has become an important city on the fringe of a great metropolitan area. Surrounding it is Westchester County, with its many villages, towns, and cities forming a cohesive community of about 625,000 people actively interested in the whole county. Under these favorable conditions it is not surprising that the city of Yonkers has prospered and continued to expand as people have sought its home-loving atmosphere. The word "Youncker" itself means a gentleman, a learned person. It typifies the citizen of Yonkers today and exemplifies its community spirit, friendliness, and congenial atmosphere.

At the turn of the twentieth century vaudeville was a

popular form of entertainment, not only in Yonkers but also in New York City and throughout the nation. It enjoyed its greatest popularity before the days of the movies, when a "laugh" was a vital importance to every skit and act.

Yonkers, in 1900, was a thriving city of 47,931 people. Its southern boundary formed the northern boundary of New York City with its population, at that time, of 3,437,202, the main center of stage and vaudeville activities. In time it became apparent in vaudeville and theatrical circles that Yonkers, with its discriminating audiences, was a good proving ground both for new vaudeville acts and stage plays.

The famous Warburton Theatre, erected about 1870, adjoining the Manor Hall, still stands, but is used for other purposes. It was the home of a noted stock company that gave many of the budding stars and future "greats" of the stage their professional training.

The old Doric or Orpheum Theatre was located fifty years ago near New Main Street. It was the hurdle for a seemingly endless procession of new acts preparing for the vaudeville circuit. Stars like Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and many other notables of both the stage and the screen strove to gain the approval of Yonkers audiences. It is not surprising, then, that Yonkers became the training center for many Thespians, as well as their home. Non-resident stage performers visited Yonkers either to win its approval or watch others attempt to do so. Thus the stage was set for many jokes and quips about Yonkers, some of which became nationally and even internationally known. Probably the most famous of them all was "What are Yonkers?" a play on words. A vaudeville team originated this phrase or slogan by singing a popular song, and at the end of each verse chiming in with "What are Yonkers?" It was always good for a laugh because everyone familiar with vaudeville and the stage knew something about Yonkers.

Another one "skitted" at the time was "Roses are red, violets are blue, What are Yonkers? Sugar is sweet and so are

you, but What are Yonkers?" "What are Yonkers?" was used many times over a period of years until the phrase was known from coast to coast. The way players would "roll it out" or "roll it on" brought a laugh; it could be added to a song, verse, or poem. Yonkers thus gained wide fame and good publicity with a laugh. In the international field the yarn was spun that an Englishman received a cable message stating that his aunt had died and was being buried "in Yonkers," to which he exclaimed, "What are Yonkers?" And a Frenchman got a letter informing him that a relative had left him part of Yonkers. He excitedly asked, "What are Yonkers?"

There also was that equally famous quip, "Yonkers is next to the largest city in America." Vaudeville performers found ways to "wisecrack" that slogan into their dialogue: "Do you know Yonkers? Yes! Do you know its fine theater? Yes! Have you played to its fine audiences? Yes! Well, did you know 'Yonkers is next to the largest city in America'? No! Yes! No! Yes!" The actors would then hesitate as if confused, and so seem to be until finally it dawned on audiences that Yonkers immediately adjoins New York City. The expected laughter became spontaneous.

There seems to be no record of all those famous sayings. It is unfortunate, as they would make a unique page in Yonkers history. They should have been assembled and preserved for posterity. The original publicity was valuable to Yonkers, and in return Yonkers did its part in the training of actors who later brought pleasure to audiences throughout the nation.

Yonkers is a quaint old name. As a word it has fascination and allure. It has history and background besides the meaning of "a gentleman." It is not surprising that famous actors of long ago found something intriguing in the word or that it appealed to their imagination. Yonkersonians can take just pride in the name.

The population of Yonkers continued to grow. By 1910 it was a thriving municipality of 79,803; by 1920 it had 100,-176; by 1930, 134,646; and in 1940, 142,598. By the census of 1950 it has a population of 152,533.

Much credit is due the newspapers of Yonkers for their great contributions to the progress and expansion of the city. They have played an important role in its affairs. The chronological story of the establishment of these newspapers is revealing:

1852. *Yonkers Herald*—the first newspaper
1856. *The Examiner*
1862. *The Clarion*
1863. *The Yonkers Statesman*—merger of *Clarion* and *Examiner*
1864. *The Gazette*—Formerly *The Herald*
1866. *The Yonkers Herald Jr.*
1867. *The Yonkers Daily Herald*—succeeded *Herald Jr.*
1881. *The Plaindealer*
1882. *The Free Press*
1882. *The Yonkers Democrat*
1883. *The Statesman* became a daily
1891. *The Daily Herald*—was reëstablished. Had discontinued about 1874.
1907. *Yonkers Daily News*
1921. *The Yonkers Statesman and News*—Merger of *Statesman* and *News*
1932. *The Herald Statesman*—Merger of *Statesman* and *Herald*
1932. *The Yonkers Record*
1934. *Yonkers Democrat*
1936. *Yonkers Daily Times*—Succeeded *Yonkers Democrat*

This recording may not be complete, but it is sufficient to furnish the background of the newspaper business in Yonkers. Some of the publications were short-lived, some were merged, and some changed their titles, but all have played a role in the history of Yonkers. The publishers and editors of the earlier newspapers were outstanding men of their era. They worked untiringly to build a better Yonkers; and the

publishers and editors of the present-day newspapers are carrying on the old tradition.

One of the early editors, Edwin A. Oliver, became internationally famous through his column that ran for many years in *The Statesman.* When only twenty-four years of age, while assistant editor under his father, J. W. Oliver, he showed marked talent as a humorous writer and columnist. He started, in 1879, his noted column "Whim-Whams." Edwin A. Oliver succeeded his father as editor in 1908 and continued in that post until 1921. During the interval of more than forty years, "Whim-Whams" was read by millions of people. It was repeated and discussed many times, giving Yonkers a generous amount of desirable publicity. Mr. Oliver wrote under the pen name of Ed. I. Torialle (Editorial). He was given the sobriquet, "Father of a Hundred Thousand Jokes"—probably a conservative estimate. In his column he ran from five to seven jokes daily—often including a humorous poem of some length.

Immediately following his "Whim-Whams," Mr. Oliver frequently ran paragraphs clipped from exchanges in which fellow humorists conducted departments similar to his style. These clippings carried diverse clever headings, one of the earliest witticisms being "Paragraphic Chowder." Other columnists avidly quoted from the Oliver "Whim-Whams"; some were even reprinted in foreign journals. From "Whim-Whams," published in the first *Yonkers Daily Herald,* two have been selected to illustrate both prose and "poetic" specimens of the Oliver genius:

> An illiterate fisherman may know the use of the perch and pole, but he must attend school to understand the true adaptation of the rod.

> THE CANNIBAL'S WIFE

> A cannibal, in days gone by,
> Dwelt in a far-off clime
> With Kate his wife, who talked as much
> As women of our time.

She was the sorrow of his life,
  And turned his love to hate
Because he found it pretty hard
  To get the best of Kate.

No missionary to that shore,
  For years, had found his way;
And this poor man, for want of food,
  Grew thinner day by day.

He took his wife all unawares
  And cooked away her life—
But found it equally as hard
  To master-Kate his wife.

The *Statesman,* on June 22, 1921, printed the last laugh provokers contributed by Edwin A. Oliver under the title "Whim-Whams." Two are quoted:

SOAP WILL HELP

*Patience:* Why are you using so much soap on your hands, dear?

*Patrice:* I'm expecting Percy to bring the ring tonight, and I want to have it slip on easy.

FRESH EGGS PREFERRED

*Footlighte:* Why is it that theatrical companies are usually taken into the suburbs to have the new pieces tried out?

*May Sue Brette:* I suppose it is considered safer. The eggs are thought to be fresher in the country places.

Mr. Oliver also is credited as the author of the famous saying, "Yonkers is next to the largest city in America," which slogan he coined in a speech delivered here. It was widely quoted and there were many puns and quips built around it as previously shown in this chapter. Yonkers has been most fortunate in having such exceedingly fine newspapers through the years of its history.

Yonkers has had more forms of government than most cities of the United States. As Nappeckamack and Aque-

hung it was under a tribal form of Indian government; as Colendonck it had a patroonship under the authority of one man; while as Philipse Manor it was under the manorial laws of England. The old manor system offers thoughtful study, for, in effect, it was the first step taken toward democratic government. The English Magna Charta was the first move away from autocratic power, but the barons forced this charter from King John mainly to protect their own baronial rights. While neither the old Magna Charta nor the manor system could compare with the United States Constitution, they nevertheless were major intermediate steps taken in the evolution of democratic government. Edward Hall's book on Philipse Manor Hall presents an illuminating study of the manor system.

After the Revolutionary War a new form of government followed, with a national Congress and a state government. Locally the town of Yonkers and later the city of Yonkers were governed by a mayor and a council. Desiring a more efficient government, Yonkers, by popular election, voted in the city manager form of government now in operation. After experiences with many forms of government, it is interesting to see this historic city finally adopting this pattern. It is important for every citizen to give some time and effort toward better government. The right man "on the job" is vital, and the full backing of the community is essential. Yonkers is blessed with many advantages in its location, background, history, and tradition. It is fortunate in having such fine people within its borders. It is important for every Yonkersonian to do his and her part to make the Yonkers of tomorrow a finer place in which to live. To insist on and vote for good and efficient government is a step in that direction.

Yonkers is an outstanding municipality. This is clearly shown by a few selected statistics that point both to the reasons for its vitality and to the certainty of its future security.

1. Yonkers has an automobile for every 3.4 persons. Every

Yonkers citizen could ride in a Yonkers-owned car at the same time. This would make a sizable parade, for 45,000 automobiles placed end to end, with twenty feet clearance between them, would form a line over 300 miles long. If a Yonkers speed limit of 23 miles per hour set for some streets were complied with, about 13 hours would be required for the procession to pass a given point. It would more than fill the length of Yonkers' 260 miles of public streets. The city also could add about 3500 trucks and buses to the motor pageant.

2. Yonkers has 45,600 telephones, one for every 3⅓ persons. If families are estimated at 3.28 persons each [1950 census], it means an average of a telephone for every home. The "breakdown" by exchanges is as follows: Yonkers 3–20,500; Yonkers 5–12,000; Yonkers 8–2100; a total of 34,600 with Yonkers exchange numbers. There are, in addition, 11,000 telephones in Yonkers served by other exchanges, which include: Beverly 7–3800; Spencer 9–2200; Bronxville 2–3000; and Scarsdale 2–2000. Both Spencer 9 and Bronxville 2 exchanges are located in the Tuckahoe central office building, while Scarsdale 2 is in the Scarsdale exchange and Beverly 7 is in Mount Vernon.

The telephone has become important in both the social and the business life of Yonkers, for, according to recent figures, the average number of daily calls made within the Yonkers area is 220,000. The service is generally excellent, but slight delays occur when many persons try to talk at the same time.

Yonkers has as many telephones as the combined total of such nations as Bolivia, 7860; Paraguay, 4986; Ecuador, 18,-882; or the Philippines, 11,534. It has more than Iceland, 17,632; Peru, 44,400; Puerto Rico, 34,763; or the whole of Central America, 39,900; and about as many as either Greece, 65,078; Turkey, 52,423; Bulgaria, 56,000; the Irish Republic, 66,806; Venezuela, 55,272; or Morocco, 49,034.

New York City has 2,900,000 telephones, or about the

same ratio per person as Yonkers, which has about twice as many per person as Canada and three times as many per person as Great Britain. The United States has some 40,000,000 telephones, or one for about every four persons—well below the Yonkers average. The whole world has only 65,500,000 telephones. Thus the United States possesses about three fifths of the telephones on earth. If Yonkers were reduced to the world ratio level, it would have only 4853 telephones. That would mean that 40,727 subscribers would have to surrender their phones, which would create a situation that even a Solomon could not untangle. [1949 figures.]

3. A large modern Yonkers post office handled 50,000,000 pieces of mail during its last fiscal year ending in July, 1949. It averaged about 20,000 pieces daily. It employs 152 mail carriers, who walk 912 miles per day, an average of 6 miles each. They deliver a daily average of about 130 pieces—a figure that naturally varies considerably from day to day. The dollar volume in 1949 was $1,451,604.60. Yonkers, on the whole, receives excellent service from this group of postal workers, who serve the public efficiently.

4. Yonkers employs about 800 teachers, 300 policemen, and 225 firemen. The total employees are about 3000. Worthy of note is the fact that there are 2.7 teachers for each policeman.

5. Yonkers has a consistent record of one of the lowest death rates of any city in the United States of more than 100,000 population. Its exceptionally low mortality rate has brought the city five honorable mentions in recent years.

6. Mean annual rainfall is 41.2 inches. Prevailing wind direction is northwest.

7. The three railroads serving Yonkers operate about 200 trains daily. Ten national trucking companies maintain Yonkers offices. There is daily lighterage service from the water front to the rail and steamship lines in New York City.

8. Yonkers commercial banks, savings banks, and loan institutions have resources in excess of $200,000,000 [1949].

Among these banks are: Central National Bank, County Trust Company, First National Bank in Yonkers, Peoples Savings Bank, Yonkers Savings Bank, Industrial Bank of Commerce, and Yonkers Savings & Loan Association.

9. There are 83 churches, wherein more than 90,000 people worship.

10. Yonkers has 33 public schools, with an enrollment of over 20,000. There are 13 parochial schools, with an enrollment exceeding 5000.

11. Fire loss is far below national average for cities of comparative size.

12. First among cities of the nation in average home values.

13. Has five hospitals with 717 beds.

14. Has 148 industrial plants, employing over 17,000 persons [1950].

15. Yonkers has a large public library with several branches, about 120,000 books, and an exceptionally high circulation—an average of 600,000 books per year. Nearly 40 per cent of the Yonkers people have library cards. This is the highest proportion of any city of comparable size in the United States. About 30 per cent of the book circulation is non-fiction.

16. Has three newspapers.

17. Yonkers is 5th largest city in New York, 61st in nation.

18. Yonkersonians seem to live and eat well, for their food purchases [1948] were $50,402,000, or $350 per person, while the national average is $218 per person. In the same year the Middle Atlantic States spent $251 and New York State $252 per person for food. In 1948 Yonkers general merchandise purchases of $8,000,000 and drugstore purchases of more than $3,000,000 rate the city as a prime market.

19. The average income of Yonkers families [1947] was estimated at $5000 after payment of taxes. This compares favorably with an average of $3640 for other communities of the country and with the New York State average of $4700.

Five thousand dollars in silver dollars will weigh about 300 pounds, so it would require three men to carry it. The 1950 Federal budget is around $40,000,000,000, which in silver dollars would weigh 2,400,000,000 pounds and require about 24,000,000 men to carry it. That is a lot of tonnage and tax money.

20. The 1939 census gave the city 1952 retail stores, 4447 employees, $5,728,000 wages, and $55,323,000 sales. The increase has been considerable in the past eleven years.

21. Of the four major cities in Westchester County, Yonkers has the lowest tax rate [1950]—$3.68 per $100 of assessed valuation.

22. It is estimated that 110,000 Yonkersonians use transportation facilities daily. People are on the move and getting somewhere.

23. Yonkers has excellent recreation facilities. There are four golf courses, numerous parks and parkways, swimming pools, picnic grounds, baseball fields, playgrounds, and tennis courts. More are planned for the future.

24. The 1950 census shows the population of Yonkers by wards and also the number of dwellings as follows:

| *Ward* | *Population* | *Dwellings* | *Ward* | *Population* | *Dwellings* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First | 9,349 | 2765 | Seventh | 8,797 | 2452 |
| Second | 6,138 | 1953 | Eighth | 12,354 | 3741 |
| Third | 14,836 | 4404 | Ninth | 17,076 | 4973 |
| Fourth | 15,959 | 5103 | Tenth | 12,294 | 3475 |
| Fifth | 12,456 | 3807 | Eleventh | 11,213 | 3773 |
| Sixth | 15,341 | 4452 | Twelfth | 16,720 | 5557 |
| | | | | 152,533 | 46,455 |

25. There are about 96,000 Yonkersonians living west of the Saw Mill River Parkway in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and about 57,000 east of it in Wards 9, 10, 11 and 12. There are about 53,000 living north of a general line following Ashburton Avenue and Palmer Road (Wards 3, 6, 10, and 11), a line which comes close to bisecting the city into about equal halves—north and south.

The lower third of the city area (Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9) south of a general line formed by Ashburton Avenue and Yonkers Avenue contains 82,126 Yonkersonians or more than half the city population.

26. The center of population of Yonkers, based on the 1950 census, has not as yet been officially determined, but it has undoubtedly moved eastward. In 1940 it was approximately at a point on the Saw Mill River Parkway about 200 yards north of Yonkers Avenue. Based on the new census of the wards of Yonkers, it would now appear to be somewhere near the interesting traffic exchange center formed by the intersection and the interlacing of Cross County Parkway, Midland Avenue, Yonkers Avenue, Valentine Street, Hayward Street, Dunwoodie Street, Bennett Avenue, and Cook Avenue. It is a busy center and an interesting point for Yonkers' population center.

27. The geographical center of Yonkers is near the intersection of Halladay Avenue and Mile Square Road, not far from the Fortfield Reservoir.

28. The center of consumer purchasing power for Westchester County is in Yonkers approximately at the intersection of Central Park Avenue and Tuckahoe Road.

29. "Mobile Yonkers." [Individual statistics are not necessarily a part of Yonkers statistics, but they do concern Yonkersonians. Since figures are not available on individuals, these estimates are shown merely to stress the fact that Yonkersonians are busy people.] If each Yonkers automobile travels 10,000 miles per annum, the total distance covered would be—if trucks are added—about 485,000,000 miles. That is equivalent to about 20,000 times around the earth at the equator and would require about 100,000 tires and 30,000,000 gallons of gasoline. Those Yonkersonians who travel by train, bus, or trolley probably add another 200,000 miles to "Mobile Yonkers." If each Yonkersonian takes an average of 5000 steps per day, Yonkers is stepping off about 763,000,000 daily paces or about 278,000,000,000 paces a year. Even

if the paces are short and calmly taken, the distance of 160,000,000 miles—about 6000 times around the world—requires a great deal of shoe leather.

There are 305,066 hands in Yonkers which probably move a greater distance than the feet. Someone may prove that they move more than 200,000,000 miles a year. If one is inclined to go further into details, there are about 1,500,000 fingers, even allowing for some missing ones, which can move another 100,000,000 miles. Toes might be debatable, but with the current fad of crossing the legs, which cuts off circulation and makes the heart work more, it is necessary to wiggle the toes, so add another 10,000,000 miles for wiggles.

There is also the unconscious mileage which one "rounds off" when asleep. If a person turns over in bed forty times per night and moves in an arc of 12 inches, it means that sleeping Yonkersonians travel about 420,000 miles per year. It has been said that the speed of nerve impulses is about 400 feet per second. If a complicated idea requires 100 nerve impulses from one side of the brain to another or over the body, it could be completed in about half a second. It will be left to others to figure the number of miles nerve impulses travel over the body in a year's time and then the total mileage for all Yonkersonians. The result would be astounding, but if all these impulses were for the good of Yonkers the city would have no problems.

The tongue, which flips here and there, is rather difficult to measure or estimate, but the "unruly member" is definitely on the move, varying greatly with individuals. No records are available as to the fastest tongue, although most other things have been timed. As there are only 152,533 tongues in Yonkers, many being kept under control and speaking well of Yonkers, since most Yonkersonians are not gossips, and since there are only 225,000 telephone calls per day, even though some seem to last for an hour, the total number of "flips of the tongue" based on the current male and female population of Yonkers seem to be around 3,000,000,000,000

flips per year over a space of 300,000,000 miles. That is considerable flipping, but the important thing to consider is whether it is spreading good will, good cheer, and good neighborliness. There are, of course, other motions in Yonkers, but the foregoing figures will serve to show that Yonkersonians are busy people. To keep well and happy, they require a restful community. They would like to have their streets and residential areas remain undisturbed, whether they live in houses or apartments.

30. "Restful Yonkers." Yonkers sleeps better now than in Indian days when a beaver skin was a luxury, better than in pioneer days when pallets of straw were common, or than in colonial days when one floated on deep beds of air and feathers, not always relaxing. Modern Yonkers luxuriates in sleep on comfortable beds which pay dividends as a "long-term" investment. If one sleeps 8 hours per day, it amounts to 2920 hours per year, or 204,400 hours for a life span of 70 years. But the heart never sleeps; it beats along 24 hours a day, and over this life span must pump about 2,575,000,000 times for each Yonkersonian and about 392,000,000,000,000 times for all. That represents a lot of effort, but if those hearts are "in the right place" and "beating in unison" for the glory of Yonkers, the future of the city is assured. It is well to give some thought to this silent worker, a partner for life.

Additional statistics could be quoted, but the foregoing will suffice to show Yonkers as it is and reveal its promising prospects for a brilliant future. Neither Indian lore nor legends of the past combined to make the Yonkers of today. No, nor the quaintness of its name and fine background; nor the mighty Hudson River and its majestic Palisades; nor the historic Bronx River, famed as a boundary line; nor even the revered ancient Manor Hall; nor the picturesque Old Stone Mill.

The glory of Yonkers cannot be credited entirely to its big industries, fine churches and schools, or its winding

streets and beautiful parkways. Its reliable citizens add color to the city; but even their energy, friendliness, and community spirit are not wholly responsible for the fame and distinction of Yonkers. It is a combination of these factors, plus many more attractions, that make the city and its fine communities highly desirable places in which to reside, work, and play.

Some people refer to a Yonkers citizen as a Yonkersite—a combination of "Yonkers" and "ite" unfortunately sometimes mispronounced "Yonker-site." The appellation Yonkersonian seems preferable and more in keeping with the Yonkers background and quaint old title.

The past names or designations for the Yonkers area are interesting: Keskeskeck, Nepperhaem, Colendonck, Donck's Colony, Donck's Plantation, Yonkers Plantation, Philipse Plantation, Philipse Manor, Philipsburgh, Younckers, Upper Yonkers, Lower Yonkers, Little Yonkers, Old Yonkers, The Yonkers, Yonkers.

A tour of Ye-ole-Younckers, to view its many historical points, will be found worth while, for after resurrecting its past, it will be easier to understand its present and future problems.

# 10

# The Wheels Hum

INDUSTRIAL Yonkers began in the Indian era when nets and traps were set on the Nepperhan River to catch fish. Even in those days the community had Indian leaders of industry who harnessed the tides to secure enough fish to carry on commerce in a wider area. It is not surprising to learn that Van der Donck harnessed the water power of the same Nepperhan to operate one of the first, if not the first, sawmills and gristmills in America. It was quite normal for the first fireboats to be developed here and used to defeat and destroy the British fleet anchored off Philipse Manor, when that fleet was believed invincible. It fits well into this background for Robert Fulton to have tested his new steamboat, the *Clermont,* by steaming up the Hudson River and passing Yonkers in 1807.

The story can be told more graphically with the aid of the following dates, which show the beginning of some of the earlier industries:

1600 and earlier. Fishing Industry—Indians fished with traps and nets.
1600 and earlier. Wampum industry—Indians manufactured this type of money.
1610. Beginning of fur business—Dutch traded with Indians.
1626. Beginning of real estate business—Dutch purchased land from Indians.
1627. Beginning of shipping industry—Canoes between Nappeckamack and Fort Amsterdam.
1649. Beginning of lumber industry—Van der Donck sawmill.
1649. Beginning of food industry—Van der Donck gristmill.
1649. Beginning of construction industry—Building houses of lumber.

1805 (Approximately). Beginning of cotton industry—Eastchester Mfg. Co.
1824 (Approximately). Dingee Glue Factory built.
1828 (Approximately). Waring Hat Factory established.
1845. Veneer Mill erected.
1846 (Approximately). First Carpet Factory constructed.

The old stone building erected about 1805 by the Eastchester Manufacturing Company appears to be the oldest industrial building still standing in Yonkers, and one of the oldest in Westchester County and the metropolitan New York area.

The following interesting item appeared in the *White Plains Gazette* on December 30, 1828:

> YONKERS FLOUR MILL
>
> This Mill has been put in complete repair, with three run of stones for GRAIN, and a CORN CRACKER. It is one of the most perfect establishments in this State. Grain of every description will be ground in a superior manner.—Feed dealers in New York can forward Grain by a packet which leaves Murray-street wharf three times a week, and can receive it floured the succeeding day.
>
> Cash, at the New-York market price, will be paid at the Mill, for Wheat, Rye, Buckwheat, Corn and Oats.
>
> Orders left with the proprietor, JOHN C. MORRISON, 188 Greenwich-street, NEW-YORK, or WILLIAM STAMMERS, Miller, on the premises, will be attended to.
>
> Wheat, Rye, and Buckwheat Flour, Corn, Horse feed, &c. &c. for sale at the Mill.
>
> YONKERS, WESTCHESTER CO. DEC. 30, 1828

This item, selected from one of Westchester's old newspapers, has real significance. The mill evidently was located on the Nepperhan River not far from the site of the old Van der Donck mill. It apparently was an old mill even back in 1828, for it was advertising the fact that it had been remodeled. The transportation suggested was by packet, as it was twenty years before the coming of the railroad along the Hudson. It was offering a variety of grains.

With the advent of the railroads in 1844 and 1848, industrial development was accelerated and progress was rapid. A morocco factory followed in 1850. Then came the following factories or plants: rubber, 1852; elevator, 1854; hat, 1854; illuminating gas, 1854; silk, 1855; machinery, 1857; brewery, 1858; sugar, 1862; mowing machine, 1862; carpet, 1865; soda water, 1866; cigar, 1871; wool extract, 1876; plow, 1878. A telephone exchange (Westchester County) was installed in 1880. From that time forward the list expanded rapidly.

In this perfect setting Elisha Otis invented the first elevator to move people "up and down" around the world. No better locality could have been chosen by Alexander Smith in which to develop his first power loom for weaving carpets and rugs. The Waring Hat Company became, in Yonkers, the largest hat manufacturer in the nation. Habirshaw Electric Wire and Cable Company is one of the world's most important producers of wire and cable. The area actually is rich in deeds of industrial accomplishments, ingenuity, and development, many great ideas having been born and nurtured in Yonkers.

"Up" and "down" are words uttered perhaps millions of times daily without much thought given to what they really mean. One casually says "Up" or "Down" and expects an elevator to do his bidding without considering the time, ingenuity, and effort involved through many years to make such a ride possible. "Up and down" means Otis, and Otis means Yonkers. Otis elevators travel millions of miles daily, serving the public not only in Yonkers, where they are made, but all over the United States and the world. New York and many other cities would be helpless without these time and effort savers that make their tall buildings possible.

The original Otis Elevator Factory was built in 1854, and was then, as it is today, the largest in the world. Elisha G. Otis, as already stated, was the inventor and he "builded well," for the organization does a global business. When it is realized that to travel in a horizontal direction whether

by plane, train, bus, automobile, streetcar, or boat, one pays for the privilege, it is surprising that millions of people ride millions of miles in modern and comfortable elevators without charge for the privilege.

When Alexander Smith decided to "floor the world," he was acquainted with the history of the Indian huts with their dirt floors, and was well aware of the crude attempt of the white settlers to make floors of split boards, and later the better floors made from lumber produced by the sawmill on the Saw Mill River. Such floors at best were crude and uncomfortable, offering only scant protection in winter. It required a man with vision to see ahead to the day of better housing and covered floors. The power loom began an era of traveling a shuttle in a horizontal direction by power instead of by hand. Today the large and modern Alexander Smith carpet mill can well boast that it "covers the floors" of America. Here it is interesting to note that the present poet laureate of England, John Masefield, began work in the "Carpet Shop," as the mill is known locally, and wrote a book describing his activities there.

More than one hundred years ago, in 1845, a young man by the name of Alexander Smith bought a small rug mill, equipped with 25 hand looms, located at West Farms in the Bronx—then part of Westchester County. During the period from 1845 to 1864 the little mill had a hard time. Twice it was destroyed by fire. After the second fire, in 1864, Smith moved his plant to Yonkers, where he bought an old wooden building formerly a hat factory. During those early years Alexander Smith and a young man named Halcyon Skinner experimented with new types of looms. In 1856 they took out their first patent for an Axminster power loom, which changed and revolutionized the process of manufacturing carpets throughout the world.

Even prior to the invention of power looms the eyes of the world were centered upon the little factory at West Farms. It was reported in France that it was turning out 25

yards of carpet per day. Today the mill contains over 56 acres of floor space and can produce daily over 50 miles of floor covering 27 inches wide. Instead of the few persons formerly needed to operate 25 hand looms, the mill now employs about 7000 men and women, or far more than any other factory in Westchester County employs. The craft tradition is strong at Alexander Smith's. Many skilled weavers and others there are third-generation representatives of families whose services form an unbroken line.

The Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Company produces carpets and rugs in velvet and Axminster weaves, for both domestic and commercial use. In making these rugs the wool is used from about three million sheep annually. The wool comes from all over the world. Some of the major sources of carpet wool are Scotland, Ireland, England, Argentina, Africa, Persia, India, China, and New Zealand. Each of these wools has particular advantages, and the stock is blended at the mill so as to produce long-wearing carpets and rugs of maximum beauty, resiliency, and texture. Millions of pounds of jute yarn spun by mills in the United States from jute grown in India, together with American cotton and rayon yarns, are used to form the backing threads which bind the wool pile into a compact floor covering. Numerous other raw materials are used in carpet making. Flax grown in the United States and Ireland is spun into threads important in rug making. Dyestuffs and dyeing chemicals come from the United States. Thousands of pounds of cornstarch and glue are used. Tapioca from Java, karaya gum from India, and latex (rubber) from the Malay Peninsula also are used in the manufacture of rugs and carpets.

In a normal year Alexander Smith produces approximately 11,500 miles of fabric on a 27-inch-wide basis. That is enough to lay a strip of carpet from Yonkers to Melbourne, Australia. In two years the mills' output could encircle the earth with a belt 27 inches wide. On a basis of 27-inch

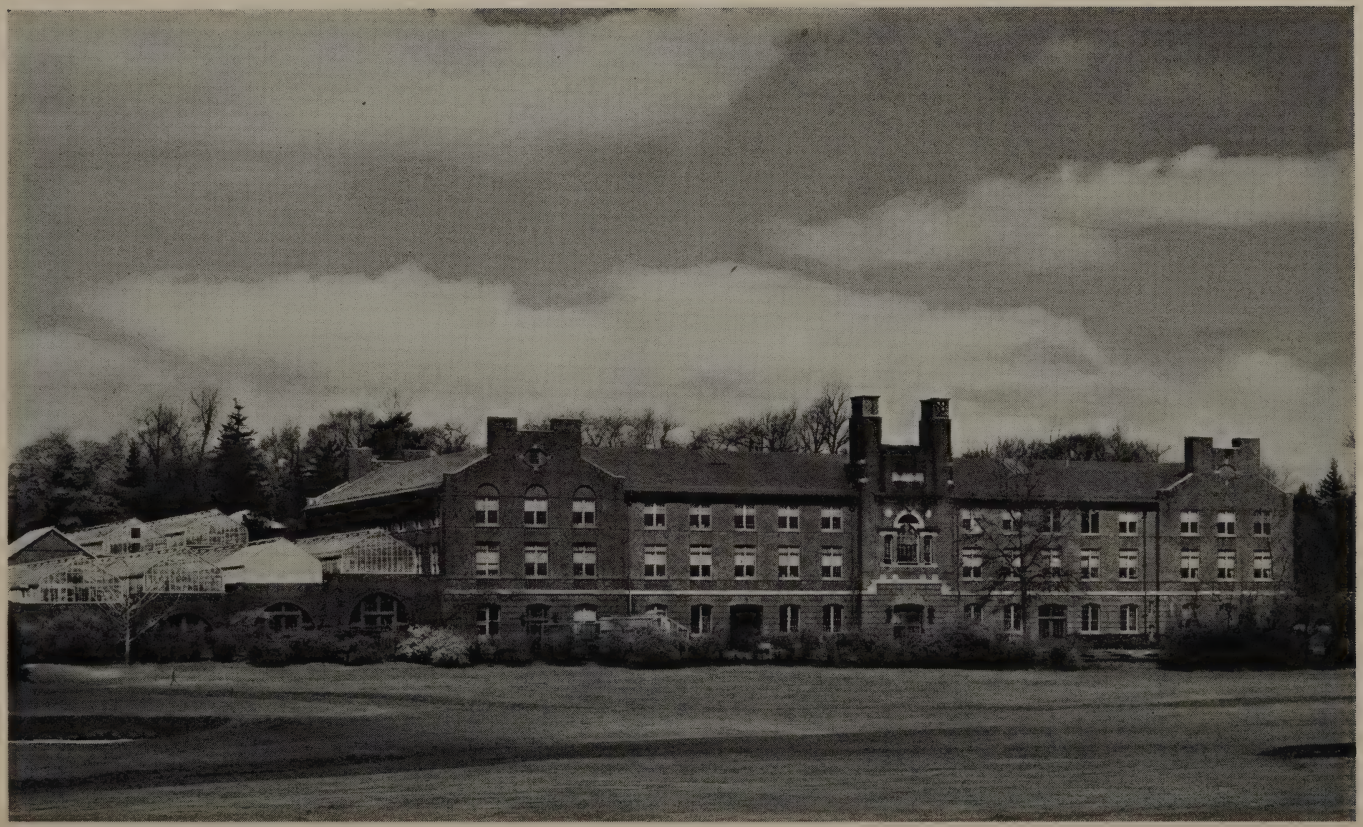
width, the mills weave carpet faster than a person could walk, and could keep on weaving after a human being had become worn out from fatigue along the way in the attempt to step 20,240,000 yards in a year.

The Yonkers plants of the Habirshaw Cable and Wire Division of Phelps Dodge Copper Products Corporation began, in 1886, the production of insulated wires for the transmission of electricity. The original factory was established by Dr. William Habirshaw, a noted analytical chemist of his day, who foresaw vast needs for means of transmitting electricity. The firm was originally known as the Triplex Company and became a part of the Phelps Dodge Copper Products Corporation in 1928 after a series of consolidations and expansions.

When Dr. Habirshaw first formed the company, the insulation of copper conductors was confined to rubber compounds. Voltage requirements were then fully cared for by rubber insulation. But as voltages increased with the development of the industry, other methods of insulation became necessary. The Habirshaw Laboratories followed and anticipated needs, developing many other types, such as varnished-cambric insulation, paper tape, and oil-impregnated and oil-filled conductors. As a result of this progressive development in the thousands of miles of high-voltage cables buried under city streets, Habirshaw cables stand well to the front in the quantities used, and also occupy an enviable position for reliability due to the excellent records of service in operation.

As the mills are located on tidewater, the loading of ocean-going vessels is a frequent occurrence. A number of famous shipments of cables have come directly from mills to the loading platforms, many of them of tremendous weight. Most notable of these shipments loaded directly aboard ship was the hollow cable used as a pipe line across the English Channel during the days of the invasion of France in World War II. In this undertaking, known as "Operations Pluto"

The famous Old Stone Mill. Photograph reproduced from a picture made about 1865.



The laboratories of the Boyce Thompson Institute.

(Pumping Liquids Under The Ocean), more than 160 miles of hollow flexible cable was joined into 40-mile lengths and loaded directly into the holds of the ships from which it was unreeled to rest on the bottom of the ocean in the Channel. Over half the cable for this great secret operation was manufactured in the Yonkers plants, the remainder coming from half a dozen sources to Yonkers, where it was connected together in the endless pipe line. When the cable was stowed, it was feared that the 4000-ton weight of the huge coils would push the lower rounds out of shape, and in order to maintain even pressure and furnish the strength to resist this weight, the cable was loaded while filled with water. The water was pumped out when the gasoline was forced through.

Habirshaw lead-covered submarine cable connects Martha's Vineyard with the mainland, and Habirshaw underground cable, with oil or an inert gas as a pressure filler in the pipe around the cable, is in daily use all over the country for carrying high voltages between main power sources. Electricity as high as 138,000 volts is regularly carried in these installations.

It is a long way from the hand shovel and horse cart of earlier construction days to the modern equipment and efficient organization of today. "Trial and error," natural to the old days, is replaced by precision, efficiency, and exacting coordination, so that general contracting and construction work is today a precise science—an alliance of painstaking engineering, competent management, and administration.

To the Poirier & McLane Corporation this modern teamwork between engineering, executive management and field supervision has been the keystone of operations—and the foundation of success. It is not often realized how numerous are the steps from an architect's sketch to a finished project; nor what a staggering mass of diversified detail and intricacies of management and control fall to the general

contractor. Through the twenty-five years since its founding, Poirier & McLane, by consistent concentration on teamwork, has mastered that mass of detail and has developed a pattern of executive control which has brought the corporation to a high place in its field.

The company was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York in 1923 by the late Charles J. Poirier and Thomas J. McLane to do business as engineers and general contractors. These men together pooled broad and varied experience in the construction field, which gave the corporation a solid background of training and knowledge even from its very first day.

During the years this Yonkers firm has engineered and constructed projects ranging from small foundations to mammoth elevated highways, as well as scores of varied projects for private industry such as power plants, dams, industrial buildings, and heavy constructions of various sorts amounting to more than $150,000,000. It has worked on projects in every climatic condition, from vital military installations in the tropical West Indies to large aircraft hangars and power plants in the cold Northeast.

A physical and operational asset of the Poirier & McLane Corporation is full ownership of over $1,000,000 worth of modern construction equipment and inventories of materials. Stocks of reinforcing bars, steel structural shapes, steel piling, cast iron and steel piping, and other essential construction materials are maintained at the Yonkers plant. This inventory is kept for the company's own use, and contributes to speed and efficiency in the completion of its work.

This is a great organization, under capable administration, which day by day is answering the old query "What Are Yonkers?"

The sugar industry first came to Yonkers in 1862 and has existed here almost without interruption ever since. This industry has contributed to the city's prestige throughout the United States and in the tropical lands which send sugar

to Yonkers' shores. For almost seventy years freighters bearing raw sugar from the Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Java, and Peru have discharged at Yonkers sugar refiners' docks.

Besides being accessible to ocean-going vessels, the Yonkers sugar refineries have had ready and easy rail transportation for their refined products on the main line of the New York Central Railroad running alongside the Hudson River; and within recent years the development of fine roads has permitted the extensive use of motor trucking for short hauls.

Sugar refining was first launched in Yonkers by Edward Underhill in 1862. He established a refinery known as "Underhill and Waring's"—both names great in the annals of the city. In 1888 Mr. Underhill sold his business and the new concern was called "Howell's Sugar Refinery." Mr. Howell and four other men whose names are venerated in Yonkers—George R. and Albert Bunker, Nathaniel Tooker, and James M. Post—reorganized the company in 1893 and it became the National Sugar Refining Company. In 1900 this company merged with two other companies, the Mollenhauer Sugar Refining Company, started in 1892 and located in Brooklyn, and the New York Sugar Refining Company, started in 1898 and located in New York City. The combination was renamed the National Sugar Refining Company of New Jersey. In 1931, in the depression, this company closed its Yonkers refinery and concentrated its operations elsewhere.

Meanwhile another competing enterprise had come into being. In 1901, a newly created company, The Federal Sugar Refining Company, erected its refinery on a site adjacent to the National Sugar Refinery. The leading figure in this enterprise was C. A. Spreckels, son of Claus Spreckels, dubbed "the Sugar King of California"—an almost legendary character in sugar history, who amassed immense wealth by his transactions in sugar on both coasts. This enterprise flourished, but in the depression business declined and in

August, 1931, the plant, which by then had been renamed "Spreckels Sugar Refinery," closed its doors.

In 1938 this refinery was bought by a new and energetic company that, since 1926, had been experimenting in Brooklyn with the manufacture and distribution of sugar in liquid form—a new technique that was destined to revolutionize the industrial use of sugar. Prior to 1926 all sugar used in industry had been purchased in dry form; but a far-sighted man, whose experience with sugar dated back to his boyhood spent on a sugar plantation in Florida, was convinced that the sale of sugar in liquid form would be a boon to food and beverage manufacturers whose operations required the remelting of dry sugar. The problem of distributing liquid sugar was even greater than that of producing it, but, after years of experimenting, satisfactory methods were developed and a new sugar refinery came into being—Refined Syrups & Sugars, Inc. When, in 1938, the company needed to expand its facilities for greater production, it relocated itself in the building that had last been occupied by the Spreckels Sugar Refinery, with the originator of the product, D. V. Wadsworth, as its vice-president.

Today, Refined Syrups & Sugars, Inc. employs 700 persons to carry on the refining process, the administrative details, and laboratory research. Its property embraces 343,000 square feet of land and 385,000 square feet of building floor space.

While the great elevator, carpet, and cable manufacturing works and the sugar-refining industry are widely known, both in Yonkers and internationally, there exists in the residential Park Hill section a flourishing publishing company that, while comparatively little known in its home city, has served to acquaint the people of every state in the Union and of many foreign countries with the name Yonkers. World Book Company, established fifty years ago, issues a long list of textbooks which bear on their title pages the Yonkers imprint, thus drawing that city to the attention of millions of educators and students using its books.

The company was founded in 1905 by Caspar W. Hodgson, in whose residence on Park Hill the business had its modest beginnings. Mr. Hodgson had previously been a publisher's representative in the Philippine Islands, and it was natural that during its early years the company should specialize in books for the Philippines. For some time fully 60 per cent of the readers, spellers, arithmetics, and other textbooks used in the Islands bore the Yonkers imprint.

As the business developed and lines of textbooks for American schools were produced, the offices of the young publishing house overflowed from Mr. Hodgson's house to an adjoining garage, where for a few years a small staff of writers, editors, and one office boy handled a constantly increasing volume of work. Eventually, in 1912, a residence next door was bought, and this, with an addition later that doubled its space, has been its headquarters down to the present. However, it has in recent years been found necessary to engage additional office and warehouse space in buildings in the business section of the city. Its local staff of employees, composed to a great extent of young men and young women graduates of Yonkers schools, now numbers well over one hundred. While the company's home office remains in Yonkers and all its books carry the Yonkers imprint, branch offices have been established in Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Dallas, and San Francisco and resident salesmen are maintained in most of the states.

In addition to its representative list of textbooks for schools and colleges, the company publishes a steadily expanding series of intelligence, achievement, and vocational tests—the so-called IQ tests. World Book Company became a pioneer in the test-publishing field, when, shortly after World War I, it issued the now widely known Otis, Terman, and National Intelligence Tests, and it has steadily maintained its position as the leading test publisher.

The brief histories of these firms have been presented here not alone to show their importance, their place in the world, and their contribution to Yonkers, but because they are a

vital part of the history of Yonkers and their stories tell part of the Yonkers story. Each and every firm has woven part of the Yonkers pattern, and has contributed more than just a few words can express. Some have faced trials and tribulations over a period of years, for Yonkers has not grown overnight, but has passed successfully through era after era in building its solid position in the world.

There are many other important firms whose histories also are tied closely to that of Yonkers, and they and their employees have helped build the present Yonkers and will help build the future Yonkers. Some of these firms are listed herewith to show a cross section of industrial Yonkers and the fact that Yonkers is not dependent on one industry or several, but has a broad base of industrial development.

### Yonkers Industries

*(Information supplied through courtesy of Yonkers Chamber of Commerce)*

*Chemicals and Drugs*

Anahist Company
Arlington Chemical Co.
Burroughs Wellcome & Co., Inc.
Ethyl Corporation
Nepera Chemical Co.
United Distillers of America, Inc.

*Food Products*

American Dietaids Co., Inc.
Lawrence Baron, Inc.
Cantwell Bottling
Festive Foods, Inc.
Havranek Bros.
Helwick Bros.
Hudson Valley Lime Cola Co.
Charles Loos
Refined Syrups & Sugars, Inc.
Riverdale Supply Co., Inc.
Sau-See Foods, Inc.

*Hats*

Campbell & Sons Mfg. Co.
Connecticut Hat Co. Inc.
Dalton Hat Co., Inc.
Finklestein Hat Co.
Yonkers Hat Co.

*Iron and Steel Products*

Aero Bolt and Screw Co.
Corvet Cutlery Co.
Hanger Service Co.
Inter-County Manufacturing Co.
Kolb Foundry Co.
Ornamental Iron Co.
Levine Iron Works
Westchester Weatherseal Corp.
Yonkers Sash Weight Corp.

*Knitwear*

Becopa Glove Mills
Glove Masters
Hega Knitting Mills
Jerome Knitting Mills, Inc.
Metropolitan Glove Corp.
Riverdale Glove Co.
Rivoli Knitting Mills
Sternwild Knitting Mills
Westchester Knitting Corp.

YONKERS INDUSTRIES—*Continued*

*Laundries*

City Service Laundry
Cleanart Laundry, Inc.
Dan-Dee Diaper Service
Daniels Linen Supply
Free Lance Coat & Linen Supply Co., Inc.
Home-Like Laundries, Inc.
Silver Lining Laundry
Terrace City Laundry & Supply Co., Inc.
White City Linen Supply Co., Inc.
Yonkers Perfect Laundry

*Machinery—Electrical*

American Electro Metal Corp.
Bloomfield, Inc.
Burnell & Co.
Graphite Metallizing Corp.
Otis Elevator Co.
Square Root Mfg. Corp.

*Machinery—Other*

Barron Metal Products
Coene Bros.
Diamond Wheel & Instrument Co.
Goldsmith Metal Prod. Corp.
Gold Star Oil Burner Co.
Jacoby-Tarbox Corp.
New York Engineering Co.
Saunders Machine & Tool Co., Inc.

*Needlework*

Bender Bros.
Bob Dress Co.
Geo. Brooks & Bros.
Cameo Curtains, Inc.
Clifton Underwear Mills
Danmore Dress Co.
Frank Dente
Elite Girls Co., Inc.
Gellmart Knitting Mills, Inc.
Geralane Apparel Mfg. Corp.
Geneva Dress Co.
Gotham Pad Co., Inc.
Greco Imports, Inc.
Hudson Dress Co.
Hudson Pad Co.
Sol L. Improta, Inc.
International Flouncing Co.
Jay Undergarments
Morris Kahne, Inc.
LeRoy Robes
Joseph Love, Inc.
Made Well Coat Co.
Minsky & Schiff
Morley Sportwear, Inc.
Nordic Manufacturing Co. Inc.
Rand's Auto Seat Covers
Sho-Pad Co.
Max Stein
University Garment Co.
White Swan Uniforms, Inc.
Walls Sportswear
Yonkers Mills, Inc.

*Non-Ferrous Products*

Ampere Wire & Cable Corp., Inc.
C & B Mfg. Co.
Mac-Pey Electro Plating
Phelps Dodge Copper Products Corp., (Habirshaw Cable & Wire Division)
R. Schumacher & Co.
Stewart Stamping Co.
Wirecraft Pearl Jewelry Co.
Yonkers Manufacturing Co.
Edward Young

*Publishers*

The Herald Statesman
World Book Company

*Shipbuilding*

Arthur G. Blair, Inc.
United States Shipbuilding Corp.

*Textiles*

Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Co.

YONKERS INDUSTRIES—*Continued*

*Wood Products*

Fibre-Crafters, Inc.
Eric A. Kary Mfg. Co.
James M. Kirst
Octavius Leon, Inc.
Nadex Manufacturing Corp.
Wood Fabricators
Yonkers Cabinet Co.
Yonkers Woodworking Co.

*Miscellaneous*

Air Way Conditioning Corp.
Allied Equipment Co.
Anderson-Campbell Corp.
Bland Charnas Co.
Bryant Heater Co.
Castor Oil Products, Inc.
Colonial Art Stone
Colonial Watch Strap Co.
Commodore Record Co.
Compo Plastic Corp.
Consolidated Conditioning Corp.
Frigid Igloo Mfg. Co.
Erich Heiden
Al S. Holtz, Inc.
Inter-County Mfg. Co.
Lamplast, Inc.
Leaf Plastics, Inc.
Lewis Bros.
Mutual Suspender & Belt Co.
Norsid Mfg. Co., Inc.
Padded Accessory Co.
Plastishade
Polychrome Corp. & Halwood Laboratories, Inc.
Edward H. Rogers, Inc.
L. Rosenfeld & Co., Inc.
Rubber Dipt Products
State Wide Sign Service
Topeka Paper Box Co., Inc.
Universal Bulb Co.
Joseph Zuckerman, Inc.

One cannot write about this great industrial development without giving due credit to those who made it possible. In many instances businesses were started by one man with an idea, ambition, and the investment of life savings. On other occasions risk money backed an idea and a venture. Capable management fortunately guided these industries along the road to success.

The backbone of this great industrial development has been a cross section of a population ready and eager to learn and with ability to carry on the production schedules. These employees have performed their work well, have become experts and skilled technicians in their respective lines, and successful production has resulted.

Labor-management relations in Yonkers have been one of its chief assets in the past. There were no strikes during World War II, when everyone in these industrial organizations literally "bent his back" to produce the needed war material. This war record is remarkable not only for con-

tinuity but for the amount of critically needed items produced. Without fear or hesitation plants were taken off normal production and were quickly converted to war production, to help the nation win the war and secure the peace Americans love so well. As a matter of fact there has been no serious industrial strike in Yonkers in fifty years.

The employees of these plants are valued citizens of Yonkers. They are representative Yonkersonians vitally interested in the future of the city. Many own their homes and more want to do so. Yonkers may well pay its respects both to these people who make the wheels of industry hum and to the combined management which is so capably steering the organizations toward bigger and better accomplishment.

One could write ad infinitum about the worth-while deeds performed by the industries of Yonkers and the salient role each unit has played in the city's progress; but the exigencies of space limitations forbid. It is hoped, however, that the foregoing review of the history of some of these firms will serve to create a correct impression of the importance of each firm to Yonkers and of the combined industries to the city as a whole.

In addition to these industrial employees there are many other skilled workers busily engaged in constructing the Yonkers of tomorrow. Some are selling goods; some are handling deliveries, rendering service, and making repairs. It is vitally important to keep automobiles running, radios operating, refrigerators serviced, and plumbing, heating, and lighting systems repaired and in efficient working order. These conscientious workmen, experts in their lines, are performing creditably, are proud of their jobs, and are daily building a better Yonkers. Expert work, carefully performed in the spirit of friendliness and good cheer, builds up democracy and helps prove that democracy works. So, whatever the job, every Yonkersonian can do his or her part both for a better Yonkers and a better world. There are many small firms capably managed by people who know their Yonkers

and deal daily with the Yonkers public. They form an integral part of the city, present and future. These firms will be in the forefront as Yonkers expands. Some of them will eventually be the larger firms of the Greater City.

There are probably 10,000,000 people within one hour's ride of Getty Square by train, bus, or automobile. What does Yonkers offer them? How many can be induced to "buy in Yonkers"? Yonkers retail purchasing power is above the average. Yonkers has many excellent stores and retail establishments, but, as in other growing cities, a concentration of retailing in a limited district is causing problems. A lack of parking space is not conducive to a "buy in Yonkers" program. Attempts to "run the gantlet" of the business area leaves one with a feeling of discouragement, a sense of frustration, of being sent elsewhere to shop and buy.

Certainly there is some solution for the Yonkers of tomorrow. Will a circular system of buses bring the buyers in and take them out of an even more concentrated district, or will the business district divide into areas? It is a problem worth solving when there is a reservoir of 10,000,000 people near by. There is sufficient ingenuity in Yonkers to formulate a Yonkers Plan. Hundreds of American cities eagerly await the solution. The paramount questions, however, are: What does Yonkers really want? What is its ambition? Whither is it headed?

If these important questions are satisfactorily answered first, it can then be determined what can be done by individuals and groups to put into effect a practical Yonkers Plan.

# 11

# The Old Stone Mill

AS LONG ago as 1728 a bridge spanned the Bronx River at a point where later developed a small community known as Tuckaho Hills, having taken its name from the historic hills to the west of it.

In his *History of Westchester County,* Bolton mentions a small settlement on the west bank of the Bronx River which earlier included only "a small India Rubber Manufactory, a post office, and a few houses."

It is necessary, however, in order to introduce the story of the Old Stone Mill to go back beyond 1853 when the rubber plant began operation. This venerable industrial building, the oldest standing in Yonkers, has a nearly fabulous history. It first housed one of the earliest cotton mills in America, later was occupied by one of the first rubber-processing plants, and now is used by an internationally known company specializing in medical and pharmaceutical research and in the manufacture of medicine.

This historic building of three stories with a loft, built, according to available records, somewhere between 1800 and 1810, is substantially constructed of stone and cement and is as sound today as when erected more than 140 years ago. The details of the building are still interesting to study. It is 53 feet long by 37 feet wide. The walls were strongly constructed, as they had to be to support floors holding heavy machinery at the time and a roof three stories above the ground. The windows are small and well placed for light. Arches over them are of red brick, making a pleasing con-

trast to the gray stone walls. These bricks are still in excellent condition. They are somewhat odd in size, 8 inches by 4 inches by 2 inches, or the same dimensions as the brick in the old Manor Hall, suggesting that they too arrived in this country from abroad as ballast in sailing vessels. The inside tops of the window openings are formed by heavy beams resting on the stone walls, to which are fastened hand-cut wooden laths. On these laths is a form of old plaster, evidently made of clay mixed with animal hair, with a touch of decorative skill for a mill building. The roof is supported by heavy hand-hewn beams braced and reinforced with smaller beams of oak as good today as when placed there nearly a century and a half ago. Skilled artisans performed the work well.

The building was situated at a point on the river where necessary water power could be developed. From old available records it is ascertained that the landowners of the area voted rights for a mill, at the same time agreeing to permit the erection of a dam across the river which would back water onto adjoining lands to create a lake to supply needed water power. It is worth noting that the original grant was for "pond and mill rights for the erection of a gristmill or sawmill." The records do not disclose whether the grant was later changed to permit the construction of a cotton mill. It is not known if the mill was built with proper approval. The original dam was later replaced, and today there is one across the river at this point, although for a number of years water power has not been used.

The mill site selected was near the strategic old Valentine Bridge on the main road from the Hudson River to Long Island Sound. A few years earlier a school and two churches had been built not far distant on the Tuckaho Hills. They were on this same old cross-manor trail that became important as the connecting link between these new educational, religious, and industrial centers. The Tuckaho Hills community was expanding and smiles of satisfaction began to

replace the expressions of grim determination of people rebuilding after a disastrous war. The mill was located in a fine farming area, where its employees could grow their own food—an important matter in those days of difficult transportation facilities when food could not be easily imported.

As soon as the sturdy building was completed, the company had the foresight to install a large bell with which to maintain contact with its employees dwelling in the surrounding region. Its exact location is not recorded and the present building has no belfry. That could lead to the conclusion that the bell was in a small tower in the mill yard. However, by chance the present owners found an old picture made about 1865, and, despite age-fade, a remarkable reprint has been made. The nest of wooden buildings around the old stone mill doubtlessly was erected in later years to give more space to the expanding rubber factory then occupying the premises. The illustration shows an interesting belfry at the end of the building nearest the lake, perched high on the ridge of the roof rather than being attached to the sides of the building. The owners evidently were proud of both their building and their new factory; so they installed a bell large enough for its tones to convey the glad tidings up and down the Bronx River Valley and over the surrounding hills. There is nothing today to indicate how the bell was rung, whether by a long rope, attached to its rocker arm, reaching to the ground outside the building, or by a rope within the building passing through a hole in the roof in the bell tower.

It appears, from a study of the picture, that the tower was not flush with the end of the building, and therefore a rope could not have dangled free to the ground. The tower seems to have been set back from 12 to 24 inches, and to have been inside the stone wall and fastened to the rafters. In that tower position the bell rope would have been inside and perhaps long enough to have passed through two floors for ready use. The bell held an important place in the routine

operation of the plant; so it is even possible the bell ringer climbed the steps to the loft to pull a shorter rope. The tower appears to have been about 3 by 4 feet in size, about 5 feet high, and of wood construction, doubtlessly made from hand-hewn white-oak beams similar to the rafters to which it was fastened. It seems natural to assume that this cotton factory made its own bell rope, probably from the first yarn it produced.

The narrow chimney in the center of the building, probably 2 feet square by 5 feet high, appears both out of place and proportion for a structure of such dimensions. The chimney, which also has disappeared with time, apparently was of brick, like the arches over the windows, instead of stone to match the old mill structure. Since water power turned the machinery, the chimney undoubtedly was the outlet for a stove or heating equipment—possibly designed primarily for the loft, which may have held the office and storage vault. Additional winter heat of some kind surely would have been needed, but it may have been supplied by stoves and outlets on each floor. The large brick smokestack at the right of the old mill was built after the rubber company acquired the building in 1853, when more heat was needed—possibly steam for their various rubber processes.

There were neither cornerstone-laying nor bell-dedication ceremonies when the building was completed, because everyone was too busy getting the new plant into operation to take time off for a celebration. But one can appreciate the intense interest felt by the hardy pioneers, on both sides of the river, in the new mill which was to provide highly important jobs and ready cash.

The Eastchester Manufacturing Company came into being with the completion of the old stone building and the installation of machinery. It became part of the infant cotton-mill industry then beginning its development in the new country. The exact date of the construction of the mill is still obscured by a lack of records. The land on which the

mill was built was part of the farm owned by Mary Valentine, who bought it in 1785; but there is no record of a deed from Mary Valentine to the mill company. Some old records refer to the mill as having been built about 1814, but one deed to adjoining land made on April 10, 1810, mentions one boundary as "the ordinary height of water line of the Cotton Factory Pond." That would indicate the mill was there in 1810. If so, it was there in 1809, for the building could hardly have been constructed of stone in the winter of 1809–10.

Another point for consideration is the fact that land was not often sold in those days, and the recording of deeds in some instances was delayed several years. So, when a deed mentions the "cotton mill" pond in April of 1810, and other deeds of about that time also refer to the cotton mill pond, it seems logical that the mill and its pond had already become landmarks. In the absence of more factual data, a date for the construction of the building could be set between 1800 and 1805. This could not be far from correct. It should be recalled, however, that at that particular time England was declining to sell cotton-mill machinery to this new nation which had just won its independence. It was almost impossible to get repair parts. The first cotton machinery constructed in this country was crude, being made largely of wood instead of metal. It was built from sketches made from memory by Samuel Slater after he had slipped out of England in 1789 into the United States. All things considered, it required the courage of a hardy pioneer to enter into so hazardous an undertaking.

It is worth mentioning that in 1804 one authority estimated there were only four cotton mills in the United States. This Aquehung mill may have been one of the historic quartet of mills. Another authority mentions fifteen mills in 1808, but most of those old buildings were of wood or light construction and have long since disappeared. The oldest cotton-mill building now standing is the Slater Mill at Providence,

Rhode Island, built in 1793, only a dozen years earlier than that of the Eastchester Manufacturing Company. The latter sturdily constructed stone building could be the second oldest cotton-mill structure in the United States still standing intact.

The small mills here referred to were struggling to get ahead when the War of 1812 started and England blockaded this country, cutting off the import of textiles and creating a demand for the homespuns these crude mills could make. The war gave them a boost such as nothing else could have done. The location of the stone mill proved strategic because of its nearness to the markets of Westchester and New York, and, as things developed, it served its country well during a crucial period.

The mill, it seems, operated continuously from its beginning until 1821, when it ran into difficulty. Again, the records are not complete, but the company evidently borrowed some money to pay either for machinery or cotton and supplies, which it could not repay. Joseph and Jacob Drake, merchants in New York City, secured a judgment on March 2, 1821, against the Eastchester Manufacturing Company for $5273.87. The records indicate that after securing judgment the Drakes were unable to locate assets of the company in New York County. They then appealed to the United States Court at Albany, which authorized judgment against the company in Westchester County, and the sheriff finally sold the property for $4750 on April 23, 1821. Attempts were then made by the new owners to operate the mill, but the available records do not disclose its activity or ownership. However, the building was vacant when the property was sold in 1853 to the Hodgman Rubber Company for $10,000. The price included the excellent farm lands belonging to the mill property in Aquehung, and part of the land on which the village of Tuckahoe is now located.

When the Old Stone Mill was built, it was of vital importance to the growing community. It was a source of ready

money when operated, and was something new, a great industry, and the employees were proud of their jobs. They worked hard with all the skill at their command to make the crude machines produce, so that they could continue to have steady work. They found excitement in watching the big wheel turn by water power, and they marveled at seeing the machines move along with it. For the first time their river was producing something, and the old beaver lakes, with the new dam, had become more than a fishing place. But in all their glory they little dreamed that beneath their farm lands lay the Tuckahoe marble destined later to make the community widely famed.

When the mill bell was installed, it soon became both the center of attraction and the daily time announcer for the expanding community. It awakened the employees in the morning, called them to work, sent them home for the mid-day meal, summoned them back to work, and sent them home at night. In the slack season, when these same mill employees worked on their farms to supplement their meager earnings, the bell continued to act as the timepiece both for them and the neighborhood. As one reminisces a little about these people and their activities in and around the historic old building more than a century ago, it arouses the hope that someday the old bell, or its replica, may be restored to a commanding position near the venerable mill, and the spot properly monumentalized with the legend of the Old Mill and its Bell. Its every tone, during the early days, broadcast to the world the joyful news of the freedom of a newborn nation and the progress its people were then making in the expansion of industry and agriculture.

The sonorous tones of the faithful bell were finally silenced as the water-wheel era passed into history. It was replaced by a less romantic whistle, which ushered in the expansive steam age. The whistle blast became the modern timepiece for the neighborhood, as newer but less historic buildings were erected around the old mill.

The whole area, from the Tuckaho Hills on the west to the Eastchester Hills on the east, lost much of its quaintness when the romantic old Bell of Aquehung disappeared, with its clear, ringing tones heard no more in the valley of the Bronx. If the original bell cannot be found in some nook or corner after an appeal is made for its return, its counterpart might be located tucked away in England where the original may have been cast. If found, some of the romance that invested the old bell could, perhaps, be partially restored to the valley of the Bronx, where, on special occasions, its clarion tone again could ring out to remind the present-day dwellers in the area there yet remain for them precious contacts with the past not to be forgotten—whether they reside on Tuckaho Hills, the shores of the Bronx River, the banks of Troublesome Brook, Tuckaho Rivulet, the Sprain River, or the historic hills of Eastchester.

A popular appreciation of the traditions of the venerable bell would remove any desire to install a newly cast replica in its place. One can hope that somewhere a bell blessed with similar traditions may be located and transferred to Aquehung in a spirit of good will and international cooperation, to become the restored Bell of Aquehung.

Such a bell could more appropriately be enshrined, not on some trifling lifeless monument, but atop of or beside some meaningful structure dedicated both to the fine ideals of the present company, owner of the old mill, and to the useful purpose of perpetuating the glories of the past. One could hope the Old Stone Mill might be isolated from the other buildings around it, retired from active service, and restored to its original condition to become the historic center.

The year 1853 became another milestone in the career of the old stone building. It was then bought, together with the farm and its now historic call bell, by a small, energetic firm representing another American infant industry. The Hodgman Rubber Company moved from its small plant in New York City to the mill building, to gain more room for

expansion. The Hodgman concern continued to use the old bell to call employees to work either in the factory or on the farm. The community again felt happy, for there were jobs at good wages and everything was harmonious on both banks of the river.

The story of this pioneer rubber company is appealing, as it played an important role in the development of rubber as a useful commodity in the United States. This is of interest not only to residents of Aquehung, Yonkers, and Tuckahoe, but to people everywhere. It seems timely to present here from the company's own records a portion of the Hodgman story, for it is part of the history of the Old Stone Mill.

"This world would be a very different place from what it is had Charles Goodyear failed to make his famous accidental discovery of the amalgamating effect of sulphur on crude rubber. And of the men who, in the business of rubber manufacture, made it a practical and enduring commodity, Daniel Hodgman was one who held a useful and honorable place among the pioneers. Furthermore, he founded the house that has the longest record in this country for continuous manufacture of this staple of modern life.

"Daniel Hodgman, founder of the company, was typical of the hardy, adventurous youth of the first half of the nineteenth century. Born August 19, 1808, at Mason, New Hampshire, he early felt the call to a wider field than lay at hand in a rural New England village. He had been indentured to a farmer, but as he saw nothing in this life but a grim struggle with an unfriendly soil, he resolved to go out on his own initiative and trust to his own enterprise and daring to win a larger reward for his labors.

"His first venture was a thread-and-needle store in Roxbury, Massachusetts, now a part of the city of Boston. This, too, soon became an irksome routine. He would have the widest scope for his ingenuity the country offered—New York or nothing. In those days of stagecoaches and post roads, this was a bold step to essay for a youth of twenty-two, without friends and practically without funds. For three years he worked for William Atkinson in a rubber factory in New York, saving his

small earnings and keeping his shrewd eyes open for the business opportunity he patiently awaited.

"The opportunity came in 1838. In partnership with a young man named Robinson, he opened a store in Beaver Street for the sale of rubber goods at retail. The first year was evidently a hard one for the new firm, as the following extract from a letter, written at Ashby, New Jersey, on August 8, 1839, shows:

> " 'We stopped one day in Providence and two days in Boston. I have not been able to sell but about thirty-eight dollars since I left New York. I never worked harder than I did in Providence and Boston. I sold most all that I did sell in Providence.
>
> " 'I shall stop in Boston one or two days when I return but do not expect to sell any goods, but shall try. I have found in Boston some 9/9 yard drilling that would answer for Carriage Cloth; it is first rate and I would buy if I had money. Can get it for twenty-four cents per yard. I have paid out more money than I had taken, so you will see that I am now on credit and if I do not sell any more goods I must come home on tick. I am very anxious to hear from you. I would like to know how you get along with business, etc. Write just how you get along. I shall not have any money to fetch home, so you must make the best arrangements you can to pay water, etc.'

"The prospect seems to have discouraged Robinson, for the partnership was dissolved and Daniel Hodgman went on with the business alone. He took a larger store on Maiden Lane, branched out into manufacturing as well as merchandising, and even invented some of his own products. For one of these inventions, a new type of life preserver, he received a medal and diploma at the Fair of the American Institute in New York in October, 1839. His factory was at 26th Street and East River. Here he made another invention, 'a new and useful improvement on overshoes,' as the letters patent, signed by Daniel Webster in 1842, described it. A pair of these overshoes, made in 1848, is still in the possession of the Hodgman Rubber Company. They look very much like a pair of dancing pumps and are still in condition to wear, a pretty good proof of the quality Daniel Hodgman put into his products.

"By the year 1849, Daniel Hodgman was firmly established in business and had extended his trade into widely varying sections of the country. For example, an order dated August 26 of that year was obviously from a Southern plantation owner for some of his slaves who worked in marshy ground. It was from Merry-Hill P.O., North Carolina, and gave leg lengths

and girth measure for rubber pants for 'Harry, Owen, Bill, Plato, Jim B., Miles B., Nelson T., Bob, Sam S., Ned, Miles, Isaac, Jim, and Charles.' Another letter, dated the following day, August 27, 1849, came from Newbury, Vermont, and read in part as follows:

> " 'We received your circular and would say that we think if you wish to establish a Northern Agency that we should be able to do as much as any House in our region, and would say that we think the largest Sales here would be Over Shoes and Boots, but presume a few Clothing Bags, Table Covers, Air Beds, and Cushions, Money Belts, Horse Fedders, Money Wallets, Baby Jumpers (had a call for today), Syringes, Foot Balls, Artist Rubbers, Nursery Cloth, Elastics, Crumb Cloths, Shoulder braces and Breast Pumps would sell. We have a large school here (about 200 scholars) and our other advantage for trade with Merchants, etc., North might make it an object for you to send us a small consignment at low prices.'

"And that was the year of the rush to the goldfields of California. Here again Daniel Hodgman's enterprise and ingenuity found expression, for he equipped hundreds of the Argonauts with rubber knapsacks bearing his name in bold letters, so that hardy prospectors carried the advertisement of his business to the camps in the distant Land of Gold.

"The manufacture of durable and serviceable rubber goods was a difficult undertaking in the early days, prior to the invention by Charles Goodyear of the process of vulcanization, which, broadly speaking, was the combination of rubber and sulphur under heat. Mr. Goodyear issued licenses for the manufacture of the various types of rubber goods then made, to the different manufacturers, and rubber door springs was one of the lines assigned to Daniel Hodgman. This spring was a device similar to the coil spring now commonly used to close screen doors. The original license was assigned to Mr. Hodgman by Mr. H. B. Amesat at a cost of $2000, but he afterward made a direct contract with Mr. Goodyear himself under a royalty arrangement. This contract was in Mr. Goodyear's own handwriting and is still in the possession of the Hodgman Rubber Company."

During World War I the company made, according to its records, 750,000 raincoats for the army; also sterilizing bags for fresh water and gas-mask fabric. In 1925 the company

was sold and the machinery moved to Framingham, Massachusetts, and, by an odd coincidence, to within only a few miles of where Daniel Hodgman started as a retail clerk selling thread and needles. Little did he then realize the chain of events later to enter his life. Eventually he used many needles and a vast quantity of thread to sew his rubber products by power machines. He even bought a cotton-mill building.

This business exerted considerable influence over the growth and success of Aquehung and the surrounding area, particularly in the village of Tuckahoe, which developed on the old farm. The old stone building had pioneered in cotton and rubber, but still was rugged and prepared further to serve humanity while making jobs for people in the area even though the old bell was gone.

The venerable stone structure and the several newer and more modern buildings associated with it were sold in 1927 to Burroughs Wellcome & Co., an organization with an unusual history. Since its story is also that of the Old Stone Mill, part of its history, as taken from the company's records, is given here.

> "Burroughs Wellcome & Co. (U. S. A.) Inc. is a vigorous and growing branch of the parent firm that was established seventy years ago in London, England, by two enterprising Americans, Silas Burroughs and Henry Wellcome. They introduced compressed medicines and other new and improved American pharmaceuticals to medical practitioners who were still marking time in loyalty to an antiquated faith in big bottles, large doses, and nauseous drugs. These compressed pills soon met with great favor, although the idea was not entirely new in England, where William Brockedon in 1842 had secured a British patent for a process for compressing drugs and chemicals.
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> "Both Burroughs and Wellcome had secured London agencies for compressed pills and gelatin-coated pills made by American drug houses. To this business they soon added items of their own manufacture, and the new forms of medicines were soon in great and ever-increasing demand. The new

products were promoted with typical American initiative, and demand increased to a point where it became necessary to give up most of the agencies for products manufactured by other firms. In connection with this new trend Wellcome invented and introduced the new word 'Tabloid,' destined to become a most celebrated medical trademark to denote 'Fine Products issued by Burroughs Wellcome & Co.' Eventually the company became successor to Brockedon, inventor of compressed medicines. Subsequent expansion and development led to the distribution of its products all over the world through branch houses in Australia, Canada, the United States, Africa, India, China, and South America, and special depots in various countries.

"The New York branch was established in 1906, when some light manufacturing was done, but separate manufacturing laboratories were established in 1908.

"Silas M. Burroughs brought to the partnership of Burroughs Wellcome & Co. a fine background of experience in pharmacy, combined with unusual ability for organization and manufacturing technique. He was born on December 24, 1846, at Medina, New York, and in 1877 he was graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy.

"The life of Henry S. Wellcome was shaped in the pattern of many another great American with a pioneer background. He was born in 1853 in Almond, Wisconsin, when this was still a frontier town and Sioux Indians were a constant menace. At an early age he began his career in pharmacy in Rochester, Minnesota, where he formed a lasting friendship with the founders of the internationally known Mayo Clinic. He matriculated at the Chicago College of Pharmacy in 1872 and then transferred to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, from which he was graduated in 1874. In 1880 he joined forces in England with Silas Burroughs to form the company that was soon to make history in the field of pharmaceutical manufacturing and medical research.

"The successful partnership was disrupted by the death of Silas Burroughs in 1895, and Henry Wellcome became the sole proprietor of the world-wide business, which continued as an American enterprise until 1910 when Wellcome became a British subject.

"Under Wellcome's inspiring leadership, the established policies and aims of the company were continued. It was a pros-

perous undertaking. Branch houses and subsidiaries were established in many parts of the world and Burroughs Wellcome & Co. (U. S. A.) Inc. is the largest of these subsidiaries. In addition to expanding the business, far-reaching programs of pure and applied research were initiated and an impressive background of scientific achievement was created. The record of these achievements includes some that have become milestones in medical and pharmacological research.

"The scope of these undertakings is well illustrated by the investigation of Strophanthus Kombé, a deadly African arrow poison. Despite immense difficulties, Burroughs Wellcome & Co. obtained samples from native warriors. Eventually the potent drug Strophanthin was isolated and is used today in the treatment of certain heart diseases.

"The first antidiphtheritic serum used in the United States was supplied by Burroughs Wellcome & Co. During the early days and until the real value of antidiphtheritic serum was conclusively demonstrated, all that could be produced was gratuitously placed at the disposal of principal clinics, hospitals, and private physicians.

"The problem of the active principles of ergot had baffled investigators for many years, but long strides toward its solution were achieved. Years later (1935), when Ergometrine (Ergonovine) was isolated from ergot and identified by Dudley and Moir, the firm was the first to make this valuable obstetric aid available to the medical profession.

"In 1908 the firm's research workers made preparations of posterior pituitary lobe extract available to the obstetrician. In the field of tropical medicine important drugs were developed for the treatment of tropical diseases. As a result of digitalis research, Digoxin was discovered by the firm and is one of the most important drugs used in the treatment of certain cardiac conditions.

"Original research at Burroughs Wellcome & Co. has contributed important new preparations for use by the medical profession. Among them are Globin Insulin 'B. W. & Co.,' which enables many diabetics to get along comfortably with one injection daily. Two valuable synthetic drugs were developed to make easier and safer the work of the surgeon and anesthetist. One of these drugs makes it possible to obtain greater muscle relaxation with less anesthetic. The other protects the patient against dangerous drop of blood pressure during sur-

gical operations. Another notable result of original research is an antihistaminic for the physician to prescribe in the treatment of various allergic conditions.

"Among the well-known medicinal products now issued by Burroughs Wellcome & Co. are those appearing under such trademarks as 'Tabloid,' 'Empirin,' 'Wellcome,' 'Kepler,' 'Avicap,' 'Dexin,' 'Elixoid,' 'Ferad,' and 'Borofax.'

"Among the 750 persons comprising the Burroughs Wellcome & Co. personnel, centered around the historic Old Stone Mill, many vocations are represented. They are skilled workers trained in the special techniques required for the production of medicinal preparations. Chemists and pharmacists are entrusted with the testing and standardizing of raw material and finished products.

"During World War II Burroughs Wellcome & Co.'s production facilities frequently worked around the clock to turn out many items for eventual use by the armed forces. The Army-Navy E was conferred on four separate occasions in recognition of this cooperation.

"Business and philanthropy do not always go hand in hand. Although from time to time some prominent businessman is moved to dispose of part of his fortune for the benefit of his fellows, rare indeed is the bequest of a whole business undertaking to the service of humanity. Yet it is to this end that all the distributable profits of The Wellcome Foundation Ltd. are to be devoted.

"Under the will of the late Sir Henry Wellcome, who died in 1936, all the shares of The Wellcome Foundation Ltd. created by him in 1924 are vested in his trustees. Their aim, in the words of the will, is to be 'the advancement of research work bearing upon medicine, surgery, chemistry, physiology, bacteriology, therapeutics, materia medica, pharmacy, and allied subjects, and any subject or subjects which have or at any time may develop an importance from the invention and improvements of medicinal agents and methods for the prevention and cure of diseases and control or extermination of insect or other pests.' They are also charged with the maintenance of a fund for the establishment or endowment of research museums or libraries in any part of the world and for the collection of information of every kind connected with the history of medicine and allied sciences which in their opinion may be desirable.

"Service to the medical profession is the guiding principle of Burroughs Wellcome & Co. Their fine products are made for the physician to use in the treatment of disease and their profits are devoted to the advancement of medical sciences."

So this is the type of business now carried on in Yonkers. The old stone building will continue to serve humanity through an organization dedicated to the service of mankind. Here is found a very interesting drama, a story of international import, a thrilling story of a past and a future.

In the shadow of the old stone edifice it is fitting to review the earlier history of this area and the circle of events that have spun history around the world. First, there was the old Indian village of Aquehung, and the Weckquaeskeck Indians who originally owned both the old mill site and the beaver lake. Later, the Dutch claimed control and, in turn, the British. The first white settlers moved into the area somewhere around 1725, and fifty years later the tragic dispute arose between the colony of New York and the mother country. In the war that followed, many small battles and skirmishes were fought around the site, sometimes for possession of the old bridge over the river. At one time the British quartered a company of Hessian troops on the Eastchester side near the old Ward Tavern, not far from the old mill site, which became a battleground for the American forces quartered on the west side of the river and the Hessian and British troops which occupied Eastchester.

Thirty years after the war the Old Stone Mill was built on this hallowed ground and began pioneering in cotton textiles. Forty years later (1853) the building became the cradle of the rubber industry and there was begun the processing of raw material imported from British colonies overseas. Twenty-seven years later (1880) two Americans reversed matters by going to London to establish a business which has now become a world-wide organization. One of these men, Henry Wellcome, was born in 1853—by a coincidence the same year the old mill began the production of

rubber products. As a boy he saw Indian fighting in the West and probably appreciated the Indian background of the old mill site.

It is intriguing to follow the course of events leading to this great Burroughs Wellcome plant now located on the land where the Americans and British fought in the late 1700's. Notable is the fact that these two Americans later did a lot to bring the United States and England closer together. And now the stone structure, as part of this great organization, seems to have taken on new life; it shows its advanced age very little even when viewed as part of a larger group of buildings. Whether the stones from which it was built were deposited in the area by the glaciers of 50,000 years ago, or were part of the famed Tuckahoe marble beds or perhaps the rocky formation surrounding them, is immaterial. Possibly the building contains stones from many sources, for it stands like the Rock of Ages and continues to render valuable service to humanity.

The preservation of this historic mill as part of a larger group of buildings presents a shining example of intelligent planning for the future. It is hoped that Yonkersonians possess sufficient sentiment to pause long enough, in the feverish rush toward streamlining, to preserve the distinguished buildings remaining in their midst. They represent an important chapter of a great past and rightfully belong to future generations destined to appreciate them. Some practical plan surely can be found to make them useful as well as ornamental.

Burroughs Wellcome & Co. Inc., established for the purpose of aiding mankind through the study of disease and medicine, can extend a hand of fellowship and cooperation to another fine Yonkers organization, the Boyce Thompson Institute, with its arboretum on the banks of the Sprain River and its great laboratories on the shore of the Hudson. It also is dedicated to the service of humanity. Boyce Thompson said that he was building a laboratory for the

study of some of the fundamental things; a laboratory wherein something could be done to get at the bottom of the phenomena of life processes. He believed that a good place to study them was in the realm of plants, and if the principle of physical life could be discovered in plants it would help one better to understand mankind, including its health and disease status. Thus, by aiding scientists to study plants, Colonel Thompson believed it might contribute something to the future of the human race.

The Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, Inc., began with several aims in view, and these it has had no occasion to abandon. The founder, Colonel William Boyce Thompson, of Yonkers, New York, gave the Institute more than ten million dollars in property and endowment, and defined its field of operation as basic research on plants. Formally dedicated on September 24, 1924, the Institute's present building has a total floor space of 85,764 square feet and the greenhouses 16,806 square feet. The Institute owns more than 300 acres of land, including an arboretum and rich agricultural land for field plots.

This remarkable organization employs more than one hundred technicians—all specialists in their different fields—and is probably better known throughout the world than in its home city. It is outstanding in its own field of operation. Many commercial organizations send their experts to the laboratories to study their problems with the assistance of the skilled staff of scientists and available equipment.

The long-continued and extensive project of seed dormancy, vitality, and storage has made the Institute the world center in this sphere of research. The defining of at least seven distinct types of dormancy in seeds of wild plants, and the discovery of methods of overcoming each type, have put into the hands of foresters, horticulturists, conservationists, and others invaluable methods for producing rather promptly normal seedlings from seeds that by natural processes may be delayed for years. Seed-storage methods de-

veloped at the Institute have been adopted by foresters, seedsmen, and others.

An extensive study has been made of the effect of various gases on plants. There are two distinct groups of gases which have physiological effects. One group (ethylene, acetylene, propylene, and carbon monoxide) does not kill tissues, but inhibits and modifies growth, especially initiating new growths. The second group (chlorine, hydrofluoric acid, sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen cyanide, ammonia, etc.) kills plant tissues. The first group of gases induces epinasty of leaves (growth of the upper side of the petiole); cancer-like growth of tissues; abscission of leaves, flowers, and fruits; anesthesia; coloring and ripening of fruits; metabolic changes in plants; root and root-hair formation; and other physiological effects. The tissue-killing gases have been studied in regard to the nature of injury produced on both plants and animals, and as to the time and concentration necessary to produce these injuries. The data gathered at the Institute have been used extensively to settle claims for injury from lethal and hormonal gases on plants.

The work that this organization has been carrying on is so vital and important and has assumed such massive volume that space limitations prohibit even an attempt here to explain it in detail. Colonel William Boyce Thompson, a Yonkers resident, began the study of the plant-life problem on his own estate. He learned from his consulting experts that there still remains much in the realm of the unknown about factors affecting plant development, especially the control of insect pests and plant diseases.

It is in the spirit of hope and expectancy that Yonkersonians will follow the activities of the two great organizations, Burroughs Wellcome & Co. and the Boyce Thompson Institute, and will endeavor to create for those institutions an atmosphere conducive to intense study and future accomplishments.

# 12

# The Trails of Keskeskeck

MANY days on foot would have been required in the year 1600 to traverse the old Keskeskeck over the narrow Indian trails, and also by horse, even during the Colendonck and Philipse Manor eras. But today, on rubber, it would be possible to glide over the old trails, now paved roads, and cover the area in a matter of minutes if it were possible to close the eyes to the many scenic charms and points of interest.

It is both intriguing and informing to explore this region over the routes of its old trails, recalling the historic places along the way from the Indian era through the Dutch, English, and Colonial periods. There are many landmarks on the 270 miles of streets and parkways; and within the 17½ square miles are unexcelled mountain views, valley scenes, woodland lakes, rippling brooks, rivers, palisades, terrace gardens, and parkways unsurpassed by any to be found in hundreds of miles of travel. A few tours, accordingly, are suggested, mainly to publicize the locations of a few of the many historic spots and to arouse interest in a system of official tours. It should be noted that on each tour certain street intersections have been designated as Junctions, the names having no official status. They are used only to clarify the tours.

## TOUR ONE

The East-West Trail—The Capital Route—The Old Trail from Aquehung, the Eastern Weckquaeskeck Indian Capital, to Nappeckamack, the Manhattan Indian Capital, on the Mahicanituck (Hudson)

The tour begins via the old trail at Aquehung Junction, goes north on Bronxville Road past School Number Eight—the home of the famous Kindergarten Circus—turns right on Cross Street, the route of the old trail, past the famous Odell House at Number 51. The old trail crossed what is now Tuckahoe Road and worked its way north through the old Underhill farm along the general lines of Iroquois Road, Seneca Avenue, and Primrose Avenue past the site of the Revolutionary Battle and the Dog Incident, and to Tuckaho Junction (intersection of Plymouth and Central Park Avenues), where the Northern Trail turns right.

The exact route of the old trail is not open to travel at this time, so Tour One will follow Iroquois and Seneca to Central Park Avenue where it turns left passing the Roosevelt High School on the old Lent farm, then turns right on Tuckahoe Road, passes by the old Caleb Smith farm, continues west on this old Tuckaho Trail and military road and crosses the Sprain River.

> Near this point was the site of the early Beaver Lakes and here the Sprain River and Grassy Sprain River join. On the left is now a tavern, believed to be the old residence of Dr. John Ingersoll and probably an original old Manor house.

A little farther along on the right is Cat Rock, a high, rocky ledge.

> According to legend it was the abode of fierce wildcats in the early days. Bolton says: "These animals, Van der Donck assures us, had skins resembling that of a lioness; and not unlike them in form, with the exception of short tails like a rabbit or hare."

A short distance farther along Tour One arrives at Armeperahin Junction.

> This Junction is named for the famous Armeperahin (Sprain) River, which makes a big bend to the east at this point, the intersection of the Western Trail (Tuckahoe Road), the Southern Trail (Mile Square Road), and the Armeperahin Trail, now Sprain Road. Near by was an old

Indian Burying Ground, said by Bolton to have been located on rising ground at the entrance to the Sprain Valley, the barns and outbuildings of Benjamin Fowler later covering part of it. It was at this Junction that the Dutch army was lost in 1642, as previously noted. During the Revolution it was a busy center, with traffic arriving from four directions. Washington's army passed through it before the Battle of White Plains. To the north, a few miles, the French army was encamped on the Sprain River in 1781 and French troops used the Junction for expeditions through the area.

Continuing, Tour One passes through the old 305-acre farm of B. Fowler, the residence having originally been located across the railroad on the right; and beyond there the tour arrives at the important Nepperhaen Junction.

Here the Western Trail joins the old Nepperhaen Trail (Saw Mill River Trail), an important Junction in the Indian era. The trail to the right led to the Indian capital Weckquaeskeck (see Tour 3). At this junction Yonkers built its first public school in 1800.

From this Junction Tour One continues to the left over what is now Saw Mill River Road to the immense plant of the Alexander Smith and Sons Carpet Company.

This plant covers several blocks, being the largest of its kind in the world. It is discussed fully in another chapter. Across the road is one of Yonkers' historical markers, which legends the site of the old Parsonage, or Babcock House, the Glebe of old St. John's Church of Manorial Days. It was frequently garrisoned by British and American troops during the Revolution. At one time it was General Howe's headquarters. It was also the scene of the skirmish between British and American forces when the British attempted the capture of Colonel Gist, who was visiting the attractive widow of the Reverend Luke Babcock. He barely escaped to the woods across the Saw Mill River.

A short distance farther along Tour One arrives at Ashburton Junction.

Here the old trail joined with another old trail, which reached Mile Square and Eastchester. Near this important Junction was the site of an old Indian village, one of the

One of the few straight stretches of Midland Avenue as it parallels the Cross County Parkway looking east toward the Fleetwood section.

Caryl Avenue, which runs east and west near the New York City line —an interesting street with hardly a level place or a straight stretch in its entire length.

Sutherland Park in South Yonkers, an outstanding example of what a view-park should be.

One of Yonkers' attractive stone walls, located at North Broadway and Odell Avenue.

smaller villages surrounding Nappeckamack, located on the sunny eastern slope of Boar Hill along the old Nepperhaen (Saw Mill) River.

Tour One continues up the hill over the old trail, now Ashburton Avenue, past St. John's Riverside Hospital, to Broadway Junction.

To the north and east is the famous Strawberry Hill, as shown on the old 1785 map. Bolton, writing many years ago, referred to it as Wild Boar Hill, "so called from the animals that once frequented the solitudes of its ancient forests. So troublesome and numerous had this animal become at one period, that the Provincial Government was compelled to pass laws for its destruction. During one period of the Revolution, it was the site of an American encampment. Its summit commands fine views of the surrounding country and the noble Hudson." Bolton also states: "Somewhere near this spot there formerly stood a peculiar-shaped tree as if adapted by nature to receive the the body of a man. In this rustic couch, the illustrious Washington, wearied with his toils, slept for two hours; his trusty guide, Martin Post, watching." Another Bolton record: "In the summer of 1780, the famous spy Huddlestone was discovered concealed in the woods upon this hill, and was afterwards hung at Poughkeepsie."

Tour One then turns south on Broadway—the old Mahicanituck Trail—to Larkin Plaza, the old Manor House, and Getty Square, which form the historic center anciently the site of the Indian village of Nappeckamack, and later old Philipsburgh.

This area is full of memories of the past, much of which has been covered in various chapters. Here one finds the site of the Indian trap-fishing place, the old Manor Hall, historic St. John's Church, the oldest in Yonkers, site of the first gristmill, site of the old manorial tavern, famous Otis Elevator Works and other memorable sites dating back to Indian, Dutch, English, and Colonial eras as well as some connected with the eras that have followed. It is now a busy business section, modern in every respect and a credit to the city. Much time can profitably be spent here observing the old and the new.

Tour One covers many interesting places. While traveling along the old Indian trail, and later the route known as

the Road to Tuckaho Hills and to Eastchester, memories of the past naturally are conjured up. The Indians of Nappeckamack visited their cousins the Weckquaeskecks at Aquehung; they used this trail and sometimes traveled on to the Siwanoy country beyond. It is an ancient historic trail which should have more recognition.

## TOUR TWO

The East-West Trail—The Trail to the Lower Siwanoy Country—The Lower Route from Capital to Capital, Nappeckamack to Aquehung—The Road to Mile Square and Eastchester

This old trail leaves the Manor House, the seat of authority in manorial days, passes on to Broadway to Ashburton Avenue to Ashburton Junction, the reverse of Tour One. There it follows the old trail, now Yonkers Avenue, reaching shortly a point opposite the famous Nodine Hill on the south.

This noted hill has a long, interesting history extending back to the Indian era, when it was a high observation post. Nodine Hill possessed strategic military value in the early days, commanding, as it did, a view of the Hudson River and Valley, also of the hills to the east and the valleys leading south to New York City. In the present age of airplanes, lofty observation posts have not their former military value, and the public, satiated with stratospheric flying and tall buildings, now lacks its former interest in towering hills and great altitudes, but still desires to gain the summit of a hill like Nodine to survey the beautiful mountain and river scenery spreading out for many miles in all directions.

Old records show Henry Brown as the purchaser, in 1785, of the 113-acre farm which included Nodine Hill. Brown sold the top of the hill to Peter Nodine, of Eastchester, who owned it until he died in 1816. Allison tells the following story about Peter Nodine when he resided in Eastchester: "During the Revolutionary War and before Peter Nodine removed to the hill, the British soldiers drove away his cattle. They 'strung him up' to compel him to reveal the place where his money was hidden. He had concealed it in the crevice of a rock. In Revolutionary

times, housewives used to bake corncake in an oven outside the house. On one occasion the British soldiers came to the house of Peter Nodine. He was not at home. They insisted upon his wife giving them the corncakes, and when she refused, they attempted to take them from the oven. Thereupon she seized the long-handled shovel which was used to withdraw the cakes from the oven and, beating the soldiers over their heads, drove them away."

Nodine Hill took on additional historical glamor when the imposing lighthouse-like tower was built on its summit. That lofty, architecturally graceful water-storage landmark of brick construction commanded a view of the countryside for miles around, and it was visible over a wide expanse of country. It had 216 steps forming a winding iron stairway leading up to the observatory atop the structure, where arched windows added a touch of beauty to the slender skyscraper. Many Yonkersonians well remember the former water tower and regret its passing, not only because of the loss of a commanding landmark, but because of the immense damage done to the surrounding area when it collapsed a few years ago, turning loose thousands of gallons of water on the homes and property in the lower areas surrounding it. While the present modern steel tank is serving its purpose well, it can never take the place of the attractive old tower that once graced the summit of Nodine Hill.

Tour Two continues on Yonkers Avenue, the old trail, across the present Saw Mill River Parkway, and passes near the Dunwoodie Golf Course lying to the north.

The Dunwoodie Club has a picturesque landscape setting with a fine golf course. This club has a venerable historical background. It is mainly located on the old Dennis Post farm of 1785, which contained 135 acres. The golf course includes a few acres of both the old Henry Odell farm to the north and the old Parsonage farm to the west. Near the sixth tee is a lovely old spring that continues to yield clear, cool water. The golfers of today can quench their thirst after tramping over the hilly course as the early settlers did, those who farmed the land over which Indians roamed before them. The clubhouse is built around a farmhouse more than one hundred years old. In early days the spring also was used for refrigeration for milk and butter and to preserve other foodstuff grown on the former productive farm.

Tour Two next crosses the Putnam Division of the New York Central Railroad, beautiful Tibbetts Brook and its valley, and turns into Valentine Street to Seminary Junction.

Here is located the imposing St. Joseph's Seminary on famous Valentine Hill, the site of the old Valentine homestead on Valentine farm, where Washington made his headquarters on October 21, 1776. It was here he offered his famous prayer already recorded. Bolton reports a legend of the Valentine family and the old house. It seems that a party of cowboys forced an entrance into the Valentine house with intent to rob. They seized Thomas Valentine, demanding his money or his life. Upon his refusing to comply, they carried him to a tree to hang him, placing a cord around his neck. He suddenly threw it off, exclaiming, "Don't be such d——— fools as to hang a man when he hasn't any money." His coolness and bravery disconcerted the robbers, who released him.

Bolton reports an incident in the same family when Susan Valentine prevented a large party of ruffians from entering the house by threatening to split, with a large oven shovel, the head of the first man who entered. On another occasion a friend had entrusted her with some money to keep for a short period. She concealed it in her dress for safety. A party of robbers broke in, dragged her from bed, and demanded money. She denied having any, or refused to hand it over, and called for her brother. During the scuffle following she tried to escape, but was seized again and in a violent attempt to free herself the money fell to the floor. The robbers seized it and marched off delighted with their success.

Tour Two continues on Seminary Avenue to Mile Square Road, the old Indian Trail, sometimes referred to as the Colonial Road, where it turns right and southeast into historic Mile Square, crossing Central Park Avenue to Mile Square Junction. This Junction is approximately at the present intersection of Vredenburg Avenue–Trenchard Street and Mile Square Road.

Here is an area of legend and history about which much has been written. Part of its past is covered on other pages —its Indian background, its legends, the peculiar circumstances surrounding its name, and the unusual boundaries of some of its old farms. Here was located the old Farring-

ton and Berline homes, and the old Gainos house owned by Gainos, a Frenchman, who supplied the American forces with liquor and provisions during their stay in the vicinity. On the approach of the British from New York he retired with Washington's army toward White Plains. There is a legend which says that shortly after he departed, his tenants, left in charge, were awakened by a midnight attack by a gang of British cowboys. A fight ensued, during which one of the ruffians was killed. In retreating the gangsters pitched the headless body of their robber companion into a well, which act later caused many wild stories to be told about the place.

At this Junction, the right or southern trail leads to the Muscoota River and to Manhattan Island, but Tour Two continues ahead to the Bronx River. The right trail crosses over the Bronx River, but Tour Two turns left and north along the old trail now Bronx River Road, passes the site of the old Archer house and Reynolds Tavern of colonial days, passes under the Cross County Parkway, opposite Fleetwood, continues a short distance along Midland Avenue to Bronxville Road—the route of the old trail—to Midland Junction. There Midland crosses the river, but Tour Two follows Bronxville Road (not in Bronxville) through the old Hunt farm, the present Highland and Bronx Manor sections, past the well-known Sarah Lawrence College, the site of the old Hunt homestead, crosses Sprain River to Palmer Road, thence across and to Pondfield Road West, Aquehung Junction.

Aquehung Junction, as previously noted, was the site of the old Indian village of Aquehung on the banks of the Ahquahung River and the shores of the old Aquehung Lake which had in early times been created by beavers, to the advantage of the Indians. Legend makes it the great eastern capital of the Weckquaeskecks. It was the crossroads of Indian trails of ancient days and close by the Siwanoy village on Sunset Hill across the river. Near by are the historic old Hart and Odell houses of Manor days. It is now the well-known and progressive community of Aquehung, so named in this story, in honor of the ancient Indian village.

## TOUR THREE

The Western Trail—The Capital Route between the Eastern Capital of Aquehung and the Western Capital, Weckquaeskeck (Dobbs Ferry)

Tour Three leaves Aquehung Junction and follows the route of Tour One over Bronxville Road and Tuckahoe Road to Nepperhaen Junction. There the tour turns right and north on the old Nepperhaen Trail (Old Saw Mill River Road), passes under the railroad, and comes to Odell Junction at Odell Avenue.

Near by was the location of the famous old Abraham Odell house and farm. During the Revolution, according to Bolton, when General Odell's father and his family were living there a band of ruffians entered the house. They locked the women in the cellar and demanded money from the General's father. Getting his refusal, they hanged him by his neck to a tree and when nearly dead cut him down. They threatened him again, and when refused, hanged him again and lowered him for dead. During the proceedings the women escaped from the cellar and the General's mother attacked the ruffians, who beat her with gun butts, breaking several ribs, after which they fled. Near by is also the third location of the old St. Andrew's Golf Club mentioned elsewhere.

Tour Three turns left on Odell Avenue and west across the Saw Mill River Parkway over a beautiful stone bridge spanning the Saw Mill River at the site of the old Odell Bridge shown on the map of 1785. The tour follows the old trail, now Odell Avenue, along a winding brook up through the divide until it comes to the famous Odell Tree near the Hudson River Golf Course.

This famous Odell Tree is the oldest living thing in Yonkers; according to one estimate it is probably 1000 years of age. It is a beautiful specimen of a white oak and has been a landmark for hundreds of years. It has been described more fully elsewhere. To the west on the golf course is the site of early beaver lakes, and a lake, still there, was formerly used in the winter for the Scottish game of curling on the ice. To the east is Hog Hill, as shown on the 1785 map. Allison says that prior to 1846

> Hog Hill was covered with great white-oak forests which were the habitat of swine that feasted on the acorns abounding there, and refers to wild pigeons that flocked to this hill to consume acorns, which made hunting good.

Tour Three leaves this scene and the grand old tree, follows Odell Avenue past the Hudson River Clubhouse on the old Forshee farm, and comes to Mahicanituck Junction, now Broadway and Albany Post Road:

> This Junction is high above the mighty Hudson River and has been an important place through many eras. The Indians traveled over the old trail between Nappeckamack and Weckquaeskeck and passed this Junction when traveling down the Palisades to Amackassin Rock and the Mahicanituck River as well as over the Odell Trail to the Nepperhaen, or Saw Mill River. This Junction was a busy place in Revolutionary days, when the British and American armies used the route many times.

From this Junction, Tour Three turns north on the old trail, now Albany Post Road, crosses the Yonkers line and enters the town (township) of Greenburgh. It then comes to the village of Hastings:

> Here is found Neutral Forge, a historic house built in 1709. It was considered neutral ground at one period of the Revolution when American and British officers took their horses there to be shod.

The tour continues north on the Post Road to Dobbs Ferry:

> This was the site of the old Indian village of Weckquaeskeck, the capital of the Weckquaeskeck Indian nation. Its Indian history is closely related to that of Yonkers. It was also a part of the enlarged Philipse Manor.

The tour continues north to Irvington:

> The Harmse-Odell House is located here. It is an old Dutch farmhouse that sheltered the Committee of Safety on August 31, 1776. It bears the date of May 8, 1746.

The tour continues north through the section made famous by Washington Irving—whose old home, Sunnyside, is a famous landmark—and arrives at Tarrytown:

The village of Tarrytown is surrounded by history not only dating back to the Indian era but also to the Philipse Manor era. Here is located the famous Castle Philipse, Sleepy Hollow Church, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, and many other points of historical interest.

From here, the tour turns east on the Tarrytown–White Plains Road to the Saw Mill River Parkway, then south to Ardsley, another thriving village:

The old Odell House is near here. It was the headquarters of General Rochambeau, the commander of the French forces cooperating with General Washington during the Revolution. The French army camping ground is near by.

From here, the tour continues east to Sprain Road and travels down this beautiful old trail through the Sprain Valley to the vicinity of the present St. Andrew's Golf Club. In this area are also the springs from which originate the twin rivers of Armeperahin and Armonperahin.

The tour then turns east over Jackson Avenue and Fort Hill Road to Central Park Avenue and thence back to Aquehung Junction:

The town of Greenburgh was one of the original townships created along with the towns of Yonkers and 19 others when Westchester County was first organized. It contains a number of important villages and is an interesting and thriving neighbor of Yonkers. It enjoys much of the same history and tradition as Yonkers, even dating back to the Indian, English, and Colonial eras. At one time it was a part of the enlarged Philipse Manor. There are many points of historical interest within its boundaries in addition to those mentioned on this tour, one of the most famous being Chatterton Hill. Greenburgh is unique in that it has 8 well-known golf courses within its borders: Ardsley, Elmwood, Fairview, Knollwood, Metropolis, Scarsdale, St. Andrew's, and Sunningdale.

## TOUR FOUR

A Short Scenic Tour over an Old Route along the Hudson River—The Amackassin Trail—The Trail up the Palisades—The Mahicanituck Trail—A Circle Tour

Tour Four leaves the Manor House, passes north on Warburton Avenue, and soon comes to Warburton Junction at Ashburton Avenue.

Here is the entrance to the Yonkers Ferry, an important gateway to and from Yonkers across the Hudson River. The Indians probably used the same route many years ago. The ride across the river is replete with charm and is one that every person in Yonkers should enjoy at least once. It would be difficult to find a more interesting short boat trip anywhere. The view of the majestic Palisades, breathtaking scenes en route, and the glamour of this ride place it in a class by itself. After making this trip to Alpine, New Jersey, and return, the sightseer will never forget the experience. From this vantage point the view of the Palisades across the Hudson is magnificent. Whether in sunshine or fog, clouds or rain, shadows lurk over these high cliffs capped with green trees as if Nature had crested the bluff in a sea of green to contrast with the bluish waters below.

One is reminded of an unusual incident that would have been classed as a miracle in earlier days. It was in full view from Yonkers. At the height of Hitler's power in 1942, a natural statue of the Fuehrer suddenly appeared on the face of the Palisades. The face, head, and shoulders were perfect, even the hair and mustache. It attracted unusual attention, and the Yonkers and New York newspapers sent photographers to picture it. After centuries of wear and tear, a large block near the top of the 500-foot bluff suddenly slipped down about 100 feet, but remained attached to the face of the cliff. The green shrubbery slid with it to form the hair and mustache, while the newly broken rock formed a face easily recognizable from a distance of two miles against the background of the solid rock wall. The freak statue, probably 100 feet high, weighed many tons, and was about 200 feet above the river. This miracle would have turned the old village of Nappeckamack into a turmoil had it happened 400 years ago, for it was directly across the river. The Indians might have worshiped it as their god. The statue was on a lofty throne above the Hudson and the village might have become the religious center of the Indian world. Or it might have been construed as the Evil Spirit coming out of the rocks to haunt them, causing them to flee in fear as many people fled from the evil spirit of Hitler during World War II. It was a strange coincidence that the unusual figure suddenly

appeared apparently from nowhere at the height of Hitler's strength and remained clear in outline while he was a powerful figure in the world; then, as if an omen, slowly faded as the dictator's importance declined. The temporary statue is no longer distinct, but the rubble remains somewhat similar to that of the Hitler Germany of today.

Tour Four continues on Warburton Avenue to Trevor Park and the Hudson River Museum.

This museum is of major value to the city of Yonkers, and its activities should be greatly expanded. It needs much more space for exhibits, which could be increased in size and number with more financial backing. It is under the capable management of H. Armour Smith. More people should visit it and participate in its functions.

The Tour continues along the Hudson, with mountainous heights on the right, the beautiful stream on the left, and a continuing view of the Palisades across the water on the New Jersey side. A short distance ahead is the junction of Warburton and Odell Avenues, which will here be named Amackassin Junction.

A short distance up Warburton Avenue from this Junction is the Yonkers northern boundary. At that boundary line in Indian days was a great rock, rearing itself high out of the water close by the shore. It was a landmark with the Indians for many years. This historied Amackassin Rock, according to Bolton called Amackassin Meghkeckassin, was named from two Delaware Indian words, "Mochaak" signifying "great," "achsin," stone; or, as rendered by some authorities, "Mekhkakhsin," meaning copper, "akksin," stone. So it was not a common rock, but a colored copper stone. It was located in an obscure nook on the eastern shore of the Hudson River at the foot of a steep bank the sides of which were shaded with mosses of wild cedar and laurel. The beautiful lake-like setting of the river added additional interest and illusion to the scene. At ebb tide the big boulder must have reminded the Indians of a monstrous neebanawbaig (or water spirit) afloat on the waves. Unfortunately, this great rock has disappeared—evidently in the construction of the railroad in 1848.

Tour Four moves to the right on Odell Avenue up the winding sharp-turning trail, crosses the old Croton Aque-

duct, and finally arrives at Mahicanituck Junction, previously mentioned on Tour One. There the tour turns right and south on the Mahicanituck Trail, now Broadway, to Robert Avenue.

> At this point Rose Hill can be visited, and also Blackwell Hill. In this vicinity was formerly located an important Indian burial ground.

The tour continues on Broadway to Shonnard Place.

> This was the site of the first golf course in America, the original site of the St. Andrew's Golf Club, formed in 1888. The first links were on the grounds of H. O. Talmadge and, in lieu of a clubhouse, the shade of an old apple tree was used. The players, called the Apple Tree Gang, dressed stylishly for the occasion. It was a three-hole links which wound around and through an apple orchard. The club moved in 1892 to the end of Palisade Avenue, to new links with six holes. It moved again in April, 1894, to its third location near Odell Avenue and Saw Mill River Road. In 1897 it moved to its present location just over the northern boundary of the city near Sprain Road. This is a beautiful scenic course on which every golfer should play. The club is unique as the possessor of the only curling rink in the metropolitan area where the ancient Scottish game that is becoming more popular each year can be played on smooth indoor ice. The next oldest golf courses in New York State apparently are those at Tuxedo (1889), Southampton (1892), and Knollwood, White Plains (1894).

Tour Four proceeds on Broadway through the old farm of Cornelius Low, the first farm purchased after American seizure of the English Manor property, and arrives at the site of School Number Two, built in 1833 at Broadway and Ashburton Avenue.

> This school had two buildings, one each for boys and girls, and originally a drummer instead of a bell boy summoned the pupils to their classes, the boy being paid the magnificent sum of fifty cents per week for the inspiring task.

Tour Four continues on Broadway back to the Manor House.

## TOUR FIVE

The Nipinicksen Trail—The Muscoota Trail—The Trail to Manhattan—The First Official Road to Philipsburgh—The First Post Road—The First Toll Road—The First Turnpike

Tour Five begins at the Manor House and continues south over the old trail, now Broadway, passes St. John's Church, City Hall, the site of the old Hunt's Tavern, and comes to the site of the old homestead of Elijah Rich.

Opposite this site, legend says, General Washington escaped up the high rocky hill when pursued by an enemy patrol. It was evidently near the former Park Hill Railroad Station, just south of the junction of New Main Street and Broadway.

Tour Five traverses the once famous Highland Turnpike, which had the first tollgates in Yonkers. Near Radford Street the tour passes the site of the old Manor school, one of the two original schools of the Philipse Manor era.

A little farther south the tour comes to Fanshaw Avenue, near the New York City line, and turns west one block to Leighton Avenue.

At the intersection of Fanshaw and Leighton Avenues is to be found what may be the second largest white-oak tree in Yonkers. It is about 200 feet from the New York City line, in the middle of Fanshaw Avenue, well protected by curbs to preserve it. It is an unusual tree, with great limbs branching out about five feet above the ground, which raises the question as to whether it began as one tree or as several small trees which, in time, merged into one. It is further discussed in another chapter.

Tour Five turns north on Leighton Avenue to Valentine Lane, then west to the site of the old Lawrence home. Lawrence was one of Washington's guides during the Revolution. The site of his home is opposite the well-known Leake and Watts Children's Home.

Tour Five goes north on Sunnyside Drive—on which is one of the largest red-oak trees in Yonkers—to Ludlow Street.

Here is the New York Central Railroad's Ludlow station, and near by are located the great plants of Refined Syrups and Sugars, Inc., and the United States Shipbuilding Corporation. It was near here that General Lincoln, with his American force, landed in July, 1781, according to Bolton, to ambush the British force under Colonel De Lancey, stationed near Cortland Ridge. General Lincoln, after landing, marched down the shore, then east across the hills to Tibbett's Brook, where he ran unexpectedly into an enemy patrol which raised an alarm and De Lancey and his force escaped.

Tour Five moves east to Riverdale Avenue and north to the Manor House. There are many other points of interest along this tour which should be marked with appropriate legends.

## TOUR SIX

The Figure Eight Tour—The Nostalgic Route. Several historic trails and country roads are combined into the quaintest route in Yonkers. Sections of it have retained the rural atmosphere, along with the twisting trail, first laid out by animals in prehistoric times. The traveler would not be surprised if an Indian dodged behind a boulder, or a redcoat came around a curve, at certain spots along the way. Those who live along the route would do well to preserve and even increase its rustic atmosphere.

Tour Six can begin at any point on the Figure Eight, but for convenience it will begin at Figure Eight Junction, the intersection of Mile Square Road and Midland Avenue. This tour starts south on Midland, blends into Yonkers Avenue, twists left under the Cross County Parkway, then right to stay on Midland. It follows this scenic old road, now widened along Tibbetts Brook Park, to McLean Avenue. It then follows the winding old road east across Central Park Avenue to Kimball Avenue Junction.

There it joins the old trail, an ancient route from Manhattan Island to Mile Square, Aquehung, and other points north. It is the same trail that the early Dutch expedition followed and later was the route of Washington's army. It was near this Junction that the famous battle was fought between the Indians, who had returned to help General

Washington, and the British. The courageous band, although far outnumbered, put up a gallant battle until most of them were killed, including Chief Nimham. Eighteen are supposed to have been buried in one pit near by known as Indian Field.

Tour Six proceeds north on Kimball Avenue past Hillview Reservoir—the well-known water-distribution point for New York City—then on to Empire Street past the Yonkers Raceway.

Here during the season are held the trotting races, which are proving increasingly popular. The Raceway has recently been modernized and is a big Yonkers attraction for visitors from everywhere.

The tour continues on Trenchard Street to Mile Square Junction, seemingly the route of the old trail. From this Junction the tour continues north on Mile Square Road, also an Indian trail, the route of the Dutch army and of Washington's army, then angles across Central Park Avenue, following its old course. Tour Six twists and turns across the new Cross County Parkway as if resenting its appearance on the scene. It seems pleased, however, to slow down and exchange traffic easily with its elderly acquaintance, the old Midland Trail at Figure Eight Junction. It rambles on north following its old route until suddenly stopped by a red light on the newer Palmer Road. It snorts with disgust at this indignity and still bitterly complains—even when the light turns green—at this interference with its ancient rights established in the animal era.

A few hundred yards west of this point, on Palmer Road, is one of the most fascinating scenes in Yonkers. The view down the historic Tibbetts Valley is magnificent. On a clear day the Empire State Building and other skyscrapers in New York City can be seen about fifteen miles away. The George Washington Bridge over the Hudson and many other points of interest, some old and some new, are blended into a most picturesque landscape. A wide parking place is needed at this point, along with a cover of some kind housing a panoramic view plate listing the points of interest in the distance.

Tour Six proceeds on Mile Square Road to Halladay Avenue.

> Halladay Junction has been estimated as the geographical center of Yonkers. The noted Fortfield Reservoir is only a few blocks away; also Fort Field, of Revolutionary fame, which adjoins it to the northeast. It was the site of the Hessian camp which was fortified with earth entrenchments during the Revolution.

Tour Six moves along on Mile Square Road, ambling and bending down the long hill across a narrow bridge spanning the railroad track which helps the narrow road to slow down and compress traffic. At the foot of the hill is Armeperahin Junction, mentioned on Tour One. From this historic Junction the tour travels north over the old trail now Sprain Road.

> This ancient road comes as near to being an old trail or country road as any in Yonkers. For about two miles no other road attempts to cross it. Part of the countryside appears untouched by human hands. The erstwhile wildcats could still inhabit the ridge on the east. It is a charming ride along the Armeperahin River (Sprain River) and through its rustic valley. The only things consciously out of place are the smooth surface on the road and the automobiles traveling it. One can hope this quiet route can be preserved in its natural setting and that any developments along its route will be in keeping with its tradition.

Tour Six goes along Sprain Road in this rustic atmosphere. On the right is the range of hills known as Thirty Deer Ridge, at the southern terminus of which is Cat Rock. The tour passes the Home of Rest, a deserving organization, and farther along is the 300-acre experimental preserve of the Boyce Thompson Institute. The tour finally arrives at the Yonkers line, which it crosses to reach a road passing around Thirty Deer Range. The tour proceeds right and east on Jackson Avenue to Grassy Sprain Road, where it turns right and south on that road. It moves along a beautiful drive on the eastern shore of Grassy Sprain Lake (Yonkers water-supply reservoir) past the Grassy Sprain Golf Course (public

course), crosses the dam at the lower end of the lake, and thence to Tuckahoe Road. From the latter Tour Six follows Tour One in reverse, turning east on Tuckahoe Road to Bronxville Road to Aquehung Junction. It continues across Palmer Road and follows Tour Two in reverse along winding Bronxville Road until it reaches Midland Junction.

> It is near this spot that the Harlem Railroad crosses a short portion of Yonkers territory, the only place it operates in Yonkers. Midland Avenue arrives at this point from Eastchester, after passing through Bronxville and across the Bronx River.

Tour Six continues on this old Midland Road as it winds its way along, passes under the Cross County Parkway at Fleetwood, dips into old Mile Square, changes its mind and passes out again, crossing under the Parkway the second time near the Lawrence Park Golf Club.

> At this point is the famous Aquehung Boulder, which, it is hoped, someday will mark the historical events of the area. It is discussed in another chapter.

Tour Six advances along the old animal trail laid out in prehistoric times when the easiest way was around the hills and through the valleys, and when the longest way around had the greener pastures. It crosses Central Park Avenue and with a few twists and turns arrives at Figure Eight Junction. This tour covers a wide area through the center of Yonkers. It runs in and around hills and through valleys. It covers several miles of historic Yonkers. It will conjure up memories of the past.

## TOUR SEVEN

The Northern Trail—The Bronx River Road—Tuckaho Road—The Old Indian Trail—The Route of Washington's Army—The Old Route through the Famous Tuckaho Hills

This tour leaves Aquehung Junction, following Bronxville Road over Tour One to Tuckaho Junction.

> It was near this point that the Revolutionary battle occurred which created the Dog Incident; while across

Central Park Avenue was the old Lent house, the scene of another Revolutionary incident, both previously mentioned.

Tour Seven continues north on Central Park Avenue to Underhill Junction.

At this place was located the famous Turkeyhoe Mile Post on Turkey Hollow Road. It was also the earlier location of School Number 5, predecessor of School Number 8.

Tour Seven goes east on Underhill Street to St. John's Church.

This famous church has been fully described earlier. Its cemetery is one of the oldest in Yonkers. The first school in the English Manor was located near by. Several old Manor houses—Bowne, Smith, and Underhill—stood in this area until recent years. A number of houses in the one-hundred-year class are carrying on the old tradition of this center of attraction.

Tour Seven travels on Underhill Street, down its sharp-turning course, to the Bronx Valley. Near the foot of the hill the tour comes to Valentine Junction.

To the right the road leads across the river to the present Tuckahoe in Eastchester. Near by is the historic Asbury Church and its burying ground. Its story has been covered in earlier pages. Across the street from the church is probably the largest red-oak tree in Yonkers. One can picture General Lee and his heavily laden army coaxing and chocking its heavy wagons and artillery, drawn by oxen, down this winding road. It required brawn and determination.

Tour Seven pushes north over Scarsdale Road, sometimes referred to on Revolutionary War maps as the Turkeho Road or Road to Tuckaho. The tour crosses Troublesome Brook, passes through the thriving community of Crestwood, and passes School Number Fifteen, located on the site of the old Sherrard farm.

This is an interesting old road, rambling between the high ridge on the left and the Bronx Valley to the east. It is not difficult to envision Washington's army trudging along the bumpy country road, keeping one eye on the holes and

ruts and another peeled for the British known to be across the river along the old White Plains Post Road.

Tour Seven advances past the old Cortwright farm (69 acres) and the old Barker farm (189 acres), whereon was located the renowned blacksmith shop of manorial days near the present Chrisfield Street. Beyond was the site of the Hunt farm of 157 acres, extending from the road to the river and from St. Eleandras' Lane to a point close to the present Yonkers line.

On this farm near the river was located the only Race Ground shown on the old 1785 map in the area of what is now Yonkers. This noted old Race Ground was situated in the Strathmore section, somewhere near the intersection of Sargent Road and the Parkway on the level ground along the river. After the crops were stored in the fall, farmers probably gathered there from miles around, including Scarsdale, New Rochelle, Eastchester, and Yonkers, to test the speed of their favorite steeds.

About half a mile farther north Tour Seven comes to Greenville Junction.

Near by was the old Underhill Tavern, owned by Nicholas Underhill, who had purchased the Hart farm and evidently owned the racetrack. The tavern was undoubtedly a popular place, especially after the races, when food and drinks paid off the bets.

Tour Seven takes the left, at this point, on Greenville Road.

There it passes along the Patience Burnett farm of 136 acres, near the beaver lakes in the river located on the Hunt farm, turns left on Inverness Road and continues to Central Park Avenue.

There Tour Seven turns left and south on Central Park Avenue along Troublesome Brook. About a mile farther south near Chrisfield Street, the brook turns east into a large lake, the old water reservoir. The tour travels on Central Park Avenue through the valley of Turkey Hoe Rivulet, famed as the old Turkey Hollow Road. By instinct one

drives more slowly along this old route in returning to Aquehung Junction, for there are memories both of the Indians who earlier grew their tuckah in the lowlands of this valley, and of the old springless wagon with its driver.

## TOUR EIGHT

The Eastern Trail—The Route to the Siwanoy Country. This tour passes out of Yonkers and briefly covers the friendly communities to the east which have grown up with Yonkers.

The Eastern Trail Tour leaves Aquehung Junction and follows Pondfield Road West to the Bronx River, continues east over the river at the old Underhill's Crossing, which in early days was a ford. There it passes into Bronxville in the township of Eastchester. On the left is an old stone building, originally a gristmill, later Swain's Cutlery Factory, but now used as the headquarters of the Westchester County Parkway Police. The tour then passes the site of the old Swain Hotel, the venerable Swain residence, now part of the Alger Court Apartments, then passes the Sarah Lawrence Hospital on the right and turns left under the Harlem Division railroad. On the left the tour passes historic Sunset Hill, follows Pondfield Road through the enterprising business district of Bronxville, passes the latter's modern high school, the beautiful edifice of the Reformed Church, the fine library and City Hall, forming a modern civic center, to Gramatan Avenue. It turns right on Gramatan Avenue, following it through Mount Vernon to Hartley Park. Ahead is the business district of Mount Vernon. Tour Eight turns left on East Lincoln Avenue to Columbus Avenue, turns north on Columbus to the Bronxville line, and continues on the White Plains Post Road.

Tour Eight goes along this historic Post Road, over which the first mail arrived in the area in the early stagecoach days. There are several old houses on this route, each having its own history. At Winter Hill Road the tour passes near the

site of the old Ward Tavern, location of the first post office of the area. In this vicinity the Hessian troops were quartered during the American Revolution, when they engaged in many skirmishes with Washington's army stationed across the Bronx River in Aquehung.

Tour Eight continues to the left down Winter Hill Road to Main Street, through the business center of Tuckahoe. A short distance to the north were located the famous Tuckahoe quarries. The tour crosses the railroad and passes over the Bronx River by way of a bridge occupying the site of the first structure of the kind known in this area. It was there as early as 1728. When crossing the bridge and entering Aquehung (Yonkers) it is important to make a right turn at the corner to obtain a view of the Old Stone Mill, the most ancient industrial building in Yonkers and fully described in another chapter.

From this point the tour travels on Scarsdale Road over the Parkway viaduct across the Bronx River Parkway to Parkview Avenue, thence to Pondfield Road West and to Aquehung Junction. The Eastchester area through which Tour Eight moves was, as mentioned earlier, originally the rich land of the Siwanoy tribe, closely related to the Weckquaeskecks. Chief Gramatan, who was a sachem of this tribe, occupied a castle stronghold atop Sunset Hill on the site of the Gramatan Hotel. The records do not disclose what happened to Chief Gramatan, but his name has been perpetuated in various ways around Bronxville.

The Englishman, Thomas Pell, and his party made a bargain, in 1666, with the Indian sachems Gramatan, Annahooke, Wampage, and Wariatripas for a deed to these lands. The Eastchester Transfer in Royal Patent was signed by the sachems in the castle on Sunset Hill. The area then became a part of the original Pelham Manor, under control of English laws and manor regulations. Later it became a part of the state of New York after the Revolution, and a part of Westchester County on March 7, 1788. On the same date

the town of Eastchester was established, together with the town of Yonkers and nineteen others in the county. The census of 1790 gave the Eastchester township a population of 740.

The area now covered by Bronxville, Tuckahoe, Fleetwood, and Mount Vernon was a portion of Eastchester and, according to Shonnard, was entirely a farming locality until 1850. The building of the railroad, however, made the section accessible and prepared the way for its future growth. Bronxville proper originally was known as Underhill's Crossing—until about 1866, when it was named Bronxville. Whether the name was adopted to honor Jonas Bronck personally or was selected because located on Bronck's River, which in turn was named for him, is unknown. It is believed, however, that the suggestion to use the name Bronxville was made by a member of the Swain family, who operated Swain's Cutlery.

At one time a movement was started to change the name of the village from Bronxville to Gramatan, to eliminate confusion with the Borough of the Bronx in New York City. A proposal to make this change was placed before the local electorate on March 20, 1906, but was defeated. In 1914 the electorate also rejected Gramatan Hills by a vote of 41 to 36. Later it was suggested that the village be named Lawrenceville in honor of William Van Duzer Lawrence, who had had much to do with the development of this section on both sides of the river; but this, like other proposals, received only limited support. Bronxville covers approximately a mile square area, is one of the finest and best known villages in Westchester County, and is closely identified with the interests and ambitions of Aquehung.

Tuckahoe had its beginning about 1823, according to Shonnard, when a stone quarry was opened there, although no community developed around it at the time. In the period from about 1805 to 1820 most of the area was a farm belonging to the Eastchester Manufacturing Company

across the river in Aquehung. Later, however, the fine Tuckahoe marble was hauled piece by piece by oxen down to Eastchester Creek, where it was loaded on small boats and carried through Eastchester Bay to New York City for use in many buildings there. In 1844, when the railroad passed near the quarry, it selected the name Tuckahoe for its station there, evidently because of the Tuckaho Hills community across the river. From that time on the place began to grow into a fine prosperous and successful community.

Mount Vernon had its beginning following the construction of the Harlem Railroad. Shonnard says it owes its existence to the railroad, as there was no semblance of a village prior to 1850. At that time an association was organized in New York City, the New York Industrial Home Association No. 1, "whose announced object was to see what could be done by cooperative action toward securing homes for its members where they could be relieved from the exorbitant rentals then exacted by landlords in the City."

A thousand members were secured in six months, and the site selected was the intersection of the New York and Harlem and the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroads. Five farms totaling 370 acres were bought and the first payment made in November, 1850. Many names were proposed for the new community, including Columbia, Fleetwood, Rising Sun, Stevensville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Little New York, Linden, Olive Branch, New Amsterdam, Enterprise, Homesville, Industria, Youngfield, and Industry. The name Monticello was later selected, but was soon changed to Monticello City as another Monticello, New York, was discovered. Postal authorities were unhappy about that name, which was changed to Mount Vernon on January 10, 1851. It was incorporated as a village in 1854, when a census gave it 1370 inhabitants, of whom 564 were parents, 623 children, and 183 unmarried adults. The Fleetwood railroad station is in the northwestern corner of Mount Vernon.

These tours take on added interest when one studies the

past history of Yonkers. Those described here are only outlines to show some of the outstanding historical spots in "The Terrace City." Yonkers needs a map and guidebook that Yonkersonians, as well as visitors, can readily use to reach these and other historic places. Tours should be planned to cover them all, and for convenience they should begin at the old seat of authority, the historic Manor Hall.

Many discoverers in the past found the old Younckers and remained, entranced with the beauty of the area and its fine opportunities. Every day new discoverers are finding what a fine place it is and remain to enjoy the climate, scenery, and friendly atmosphere. Even old residents of Yonkers are day by day learning of new advantages, even rediscovering things which they had forgotten and which comprise the attractions for new discoverers. Yonkers has so much history, so many historical settings, and such a beautiful countryside that its citizens owe it both to the community and the world to open their gates to visitors from everywhere. It is important to locate and mark the many historical and legendary places, the old landmarks and points of interest. The smallest incidents and places should be properly marked, as legendary stories can be both interesting and instructive.

A beginning has already been made, some points of interest having been marked:

1. Site of Gristmill—Larkin Plaza
2. Yonkers—South Broadway
3. Yonkers—North Broadway
4. Yonkers—Yonkers Avenue Bridge over Bronx Parkway
5. St. John's Church—South Broadway
6. St. John's Cemetery—South Broadway
7. Site of St. John's Glebe—Saw Mill River Road
8. Site of Old Tavern—South Broadway
9. Site of Camping Ground—Mile Square Road—Seminary Avenue
10. Mile Square Road—five markers
11. Sprain Road—four markers
12. Colonial Road—two markers

It seems incredible, however, that one of these historical markers already has been removed—the one marking the lo-

cation of the first old mill in Yonkers—and now lies "dead" at Police Headquarters, while busy Yonkers again forgets. It is sincerely hoped something can be said here that will arouse many loyal Yonkersonians to adopt some bold plan to make their city widely known as the unique historic center it actually is, and that proper steps will be taken to mark the many places of interest and maintain them for the future. That would not be stopping the wheels of progress, but rather oiling the wheels of the city that it may move forward faster in the light of its proud venerable background.

The history of this area is actually the story of the beginning of this nation. Visitors from afar will enjoy coming here to absorb some of the colorful atmosphere if a tour is planned for their convenience. Where can there be found a more interesting tour? The following partial list of old places should help to answer that query:

The Hudson River—A picturesque scene of rare charm
Place where Indian fleet attacked *Half Moon*
Point where fireboats attacked British fleet
Area of test run of Robert Fulton's *Clermont*
Palisades, with all their grandeur
Terrace gardens—All around the city
Old Revolutionary dock—Cornwallis crossed Hudson
Site of Indian village of Nappeckamack
Site of Indian village of Nipinicksen
Manor House with its historical past
Old trap-fishing place and Nepperhan River
Site of Old Tavern and stagecoach hotel
Site of first toll bridge
Old Albany Post Road
Site of first tollgate
St. John's Church, Yonkers
Hudson River Museum
Otis Elevator Factory
Site of Yonkers' first public school
Site of Amackassin Rock
Large Odell Tree
Site of first golf course—St. Andrew's
Boyce Thompson Institute
Alexander Smith Carpet Mills
School No. 16—Aaron Burr hideout

Washington headquarters—Valentine House
Valentine Hill
Last Indian battle ground—Chief Nimham killed
Mile Square and its historical sites
Mile Square Road and its legends
Place where Dutch expedition got lost
Old home of Dr. John Ingersoll
Cat Rocks, with its legend
Famous Siamese Twin rivers, Armeperahin and Armonperahin
Site of Old Beaver Lakes
Site of Aquehung—Indian village
Bronx River
Revolutionary battle—Mohegan Heights
Location of Dog Incident
Turkey Hollow Road
Turkey Hollow—Turkeyhoe Station on old road
Site of battle with Hessians—Aquehung
Site of battle near Tuckaho Hills School
Site of Tuckaho Hills School
St. John's Church—Aquehung
Asbury Church
Old Odell House
School No. 8, Home of famous Kindergarten Circus
Old Hart House
Old Stone Mill on Bronx River—Aquehung
Site where Bronx River moved into Yonkers
Water shaft on Palmer Road
Sarah Lawrence College
Old Indian trails
Stagecoach routes
Sprain Road
Site of old Indian burying ground—Sprain Road
Site of old Benj. Fowler House—Tuckahoe Road
Third location of St. Andrew's Golf Course
Site of Abraham Odell House—Its legend
Site of old Odell bridge across Saw Mill River
Hog Hill—Its legends
Famous Blackwell Hill—Its legends
Site of Indian burying ground, near Blackwell Hill
Site of famous School No. 2 and its drummer boy
Strawberry Hill—Sometimes referred to as Boar Hill
Site of famous tree where Washington relaxed
Place where spy Huddlestone was captured near by
Site of Indian village on eastern slope of Strawberry Hill
Site of English Manor school—Philipsburgh area
Site of old parsonage, once General Howe's headquarters

Site of skirmish between Colonel Gist and British
Fortfield Reservoir
Old spring—Dunwoodie Golf Course
Site of old Reynolds Tavern—Mile Square
Site of old Gainos House—Its haunted well—Mile Square
Rocky hill up which Washington escaped from enemy patrols
Famous Highland Turnpike
Important Hillview Reservoir
Site of first racetrack—Before Revolution
Nodine Hill
Old Fanshaw Tree
Site of old Philipsburgh School
Aquehung Boulder
Geographical center of Yonkers
Population center of Yonkers
Site of old Samuel Lawrence home
Site where General Lincoln landed at Ludlow

While touring the points of interest in the present Yonkers, one could explore other places in the broader area of the old Philipse Manor, which included the land from the Harlem River to the Croton River. Here are a few worth-while spots:

Washington Irving's Home—Tarrytown
Sleepy Hollow Church—Tarrytown
Sleepy Hollow Cemetery—Tarrytown
Philipse Manor House—Tarrytown
Tavern where first cocktail was made and served—Ardsley
King's Bridge
Sites of many Revolutionary War skirmishes in what is now the Bronx

There are other points of interest too numerous to mention here, not only in Yonkers, but also in the surrounding region, all of which could be included in a well-organized tour from the Manor Hall. In these various historical spots Yonkers possesses a group of items supercharged with memories of the past. Sometimes memory dwells on a legend, sometimes on a historic rock, tree, or house now gone. Such spots can be marked only by a sign or monument for the information of future generations. But Yonkers holds memories based on things still preserved and which should be

prized as part of the city's warp and woof—the connecting link, in fact, between the past, the present, and the future.

The oldest object of its kind in a community holds a degree of fascination, whether a rock, tree, house, building, or business. Some of the Yonkers "oldsters" are listed below, with the hope that a complete schedule can be compiled later and preserved in the Hudson River Museum:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Hudson River | One of oldest rivers of America and oldest in Yonkers. Its beginning might go back a million years as a trickle from the slowly melting glaciers to the north. |
| 2. Palisades | The rocky walls forming the shores of the Hudson River date back to time immemorial. |
| 3. Aquehung Boulder | History unknown but probably dates back to the Glacial Age. At least one of the oldest objects in Yonkers. (Midland Avenue.) |
| 4. Odell Tree | Possibly the oldest living thing in Yonkers. Estimated age about 1000 years. (Odell Avenue.) |
| 5. Nappeckamack Trail | Indian trail from Nappeckamack to Nipinicksen—now South Broadway. Believed to be the oldest trail in Yonkers. |
| 6. Oldest Water Supply | The first water supply was from springs and rivers. Some springs are still available. Should be properly designated. |
| 7. Oldest Water Route | The Hudson River evidently floated the Indians into this area, and for a time it was their sole travel route before they began to follow the animal trails. It continues as a water highway. |
| 8. Nappeckamack Cemetery | Yonkers has forgotten this old burying ground, but it is still here even though "turned back to earth" and built over. |
| 9. First Stone Construction in Yonkers | The old stone foundations for the first gristmill and sawmill on the Nepperhan—some can possibly be uncovered. (About 1648.) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10. Philipse Manor Hall | The oldest residence in Yonkers. (1682.) |
| 11. St. John's Church | Oldest church in Yonkers. (Broadway. 1752.) |
| 12. St. John's Cemetery | The first church burial grounds. (About 1752.) |
| 13. Hart House<br>Odell House | Possibly the oldest residential houses owned by tenant farmers of the English Manor. It is not known which was built first; probably about the same time in the English era. (Aquehung area. 1745–1755.) |
| 14. Oldest Road | The Indian trail south, now South Broadway, became the first road. (1669.) |
| 15. Oldest Post Road | The same route became the first post road. (1747.) |
| 16. Oldest Street | Near Getty Square the old road became the first street in the village of Yonkers. (1855.) |
| 17. Old Stone Mill | The oldest industrial building in Yonkers. (Aquehung. About 1805.) |
| 18. Old Croton Aqueduct | Oldest water tunnel. (1837.) |
| 19. First Railroad | The Harlem Division of the New York Central was the first railroad in Yonkers. (1844.) |
| 20. First Railroad Station | The present Yonkers station on the Hudson River Railroad became the first railroad station stop in Yonkers. (1848.) |
| 21. Yonkers Savings Bank | Oldest bank in operation in Yonkers. (1854.) |
| 22. Peck's Men's Store | Oldest store still in operation. (1854.) |
| 23. *Herald Statesman* | Oldest newspaper in Yonkers. (1856.) |
| 24. Ashburton Avenue Bridge | Oldest bridge in Yonkers. (1868.) |
| 25. St. John's Hospital | First hospital in Yonkers. (1870.) |
| 26. School No. 1 | Oldest school building now in use. (1872.) |
| 27. Warburton Theatre<br>Old Music Hall | Building still standing—now stores. (1872.) |
| 28. Proctor's Theater | Oldest show place in operation. (1919.) |
| 29. Hudson River Golf Club | Oldest golf club now in Yonkers. (1900.) |
| 30. Irving Park | First established in 1895. |
| 31. Bronx River Parkway | First parkway road in Yonkers. (1921.) |

Apropos of the foregoing list of oldest things, again it is timely to refer here to the ancient Scottish game of curling popular in Yonkers for many years, despite the fact that comparatively few people are acquainted with it. At present the only curling rink in the metropolitan area is, as previously mentioned in this chapter, located at the St. Andrew's Club formerly in Yonkers, but now situated just beyond its northern boundary. Fitting it is that this former Yonkers club, the oldest golf club in America, also should be the home of the old game of curling. Many years ago, before the modern indoor rink was built, curling was played, as it was in the "old country," on outdoor ice, the lake now within the confines of the Hudson River Golf Course near Odell Avenue having been used. Even in earlier days it was played, when ice and weather permitted, on the lake located in what is now Van Cortlandt Park when that area was a part of old Yonkers.

This ancient curling game is designed for experts. It has a very small public or spectator appeal because of its many fine points and the difficulty of following the play from the seats placed at one end of the rink. It is engrossing to those understanding its scientific angles. Only experts know the "drift of the ice" or its speed. They alone can control the heavy 40-pound stones, give them the delicate twist to the right or left, "inturn" or "outturn," to pass "blocking" stones, carom into position, take out an opposition stone, or stop at the right spot in or near the circle.

Curling is a gentleman's game. Betting is unheard of, and no excitement prevails; there is only calm planning and maneuvering. Sweeping becomes a science; it is a rare experience to follow a weakly thrown stone and watch it glide slowly along the ice when skilled sweepers, behind the brooms, know how to "warm" the ice. The know-how with a touch of so much or so little will take it "home." Someday this game will be brought out into the open for the benefit of the public. The stones will be of different colors for their identification. An announcer will call the shots and re-

port the results to the spectators. The players will wear red and blue for identification and numbers to show their positions on the team.

Madison Square Garden could be filled to capacity for the great Bonspiels—some with international flavor—presented in a colorful Scottish setting. The curling rink could be located in the middle of the Garden's large ice floor, leaving a span of ice surrounding it. On this floor of ice could be staged a grand parade, with the participants clad in colorful Scottish regalia and led by skirling bagpipe bands. This would set the scene for a great game and form a background for the curlers, wearing their unique Scottish costumes. The games ended, the laddies and the lassies could follow with skating and dancing exhibitions on the ice or dance floor, and the spectators could join in a grand ball lasting into the wee sma' hours of the morning. Such an event would be a boon to a fine Scottish sport that should become so popular that more rinks would have to be built to house the games. Some enthusiastic Yonkersonians are playing this curling game now, and more will surely be doing so in the future. It is a fine winter sport that should fit into the traditions of old Yonkers.

# 13

# The Streets of Yonkers

"YOU take the High Road and I'll take the Low Road" is an expression as popular in Yonkers as in Scotland; but Yonkers can offer several highland routes and many lowland routes, all of which present exceptional opportunities for verse and song.

For those preferring to travel in the high altitudes or desiring to write verses, there is an intriguing choice of routes —the High Road Route over High Street, Highland Place, Highland Circle, and Highland Avenue; the Hill Route along Hill Terrace, Hilltop Road, Hillside Avenue, Hillside Drive, Hillcrest Avenue, Hillcourt Place, Hillwood Place, Hillwood Avenue, Hillsbright Terrace, Rosehill Terrace, Cross Hill Avenue, Round Hill Drive, Beechhill Road, Fort Hill Avenue, and East Fort Hill Avenue; the Ridge Route over Ridge Road, Ridge Avenue, Ridge Drive, Ridgeland Road, Ridgewood Avenue, and Ridgeview Avenue; and the Upland Route over Upland Avenue and Upland Place to Summit Street, where one reaches the Crest Route to travel along Crest Place, Cresthill Road, Crestwood Avenue, Crestvale Terrace, Crestmont Avenue, and Woodcrest Avenue, which leads to Heights Drive, Knollwood Road, Palisade Avenue, and Canyon Circle.

For those preferring the scenery of the valleys and meadows along the low road, there is the Valley Route over Valley Road, Valley Avenue and Valley Close, with an alternate route through Greenvale Avenue, Greenvale Place, Greenvale Terrace, Longvale Road, and Longvale Terrace.

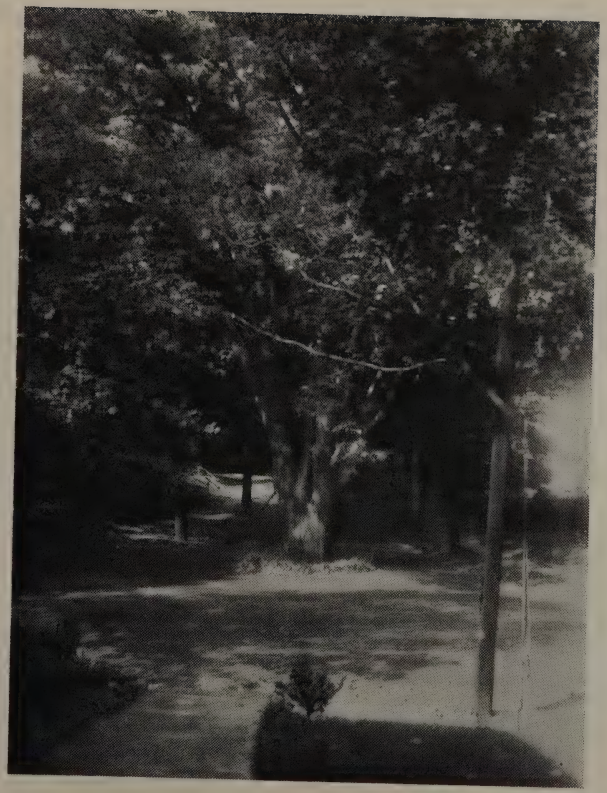
Then there is the route through the dales over Brookdale Drive, Rosedale Road, and Riverdale Avenue, with a companion route through the meadow over Long Meadow Road, Meadow Avenue, Meadow Street, and Meadowbrook Place. There is the Dell Route over Dellwood Road and Dellwood Circle, which reaches the Glen Route, then an exciting trip over Glen Road, Glenwood Road, Glenwood Terrace, Glen Washington Avenue, Glen Brook Avenue, to reach Sprain Road, Ravine Avenue, and Woods Hole Drive.

For variety Yonkers offers the early morning traveler a route over Morningside Avenue and the Sunshine Route along Sunrise Terrace, Sunny Slope Terrace, Sunnyside Drive, and Sunnybrook Road. While enjoying the sunshine a traveler can select a Post on the Point and get a fine View from Overcliff or Undercliff, Overhill or Underhill, Edgecliff Terrace, Wyncliff Road, Ledgewood Road, Ledgewood Drive, Ledgewood Terrace, Rockledge Road, Rockledge Place, as he looks far into the distance from Landscape Avenue and Overlook Terrace to Grand View Boulevard, Highview Terrace, Hill View Avenue, Ridgeview Avenue, Fairview Street, to Alta Vista Drive, Buena Vista Avenue, and Vista Street; while from Western Avenue and Westerly Street he can see Riverview Place and Hudson View Terrace. From Eastview Avenue in the distance are Sound View and Parkview Avenues, while from North View Place and North View Terrace can be seen Lakeview Avenue.

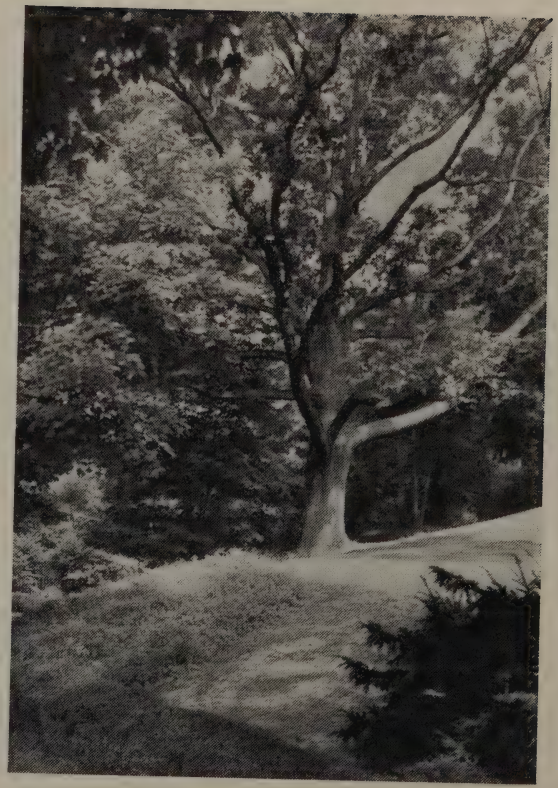
If the traveler becomes thirsty along these fascinating Yonkers routes, he will find Water in Wells and a Spring, while more water is available on Brookside Circle, Brook Road, Brook Street, River Place, and River Street, as well as on Pond Street, Pondfield Road West, Lakeside Drive, and Lake Avenue. Close by these Water Routes will be found Fern Terrace, Fernbrook Street, Ferndale Street, Clover Place, and Clover Street.

There is also the Park Route over Park Avenue, Park Avenue Terrace, Park Lane, Park Hill Avenue, Park Hill Place,

The famous Odell Tree, on Odell Avenue—the oldest tree in Yonkers. The perfect work of Nature is shown here as the great oak spreads its leafy surface for all to see and admire.



Located in the center of Fanshaw Avenue stands the Fanshaw Tree—the second oldest tree in Yonkers.



The Dellwood Tree on Dellwood Road. This landmark is one of the original trees of the great white-oak forest of early days.

The southerly end of Rumsey Road, with its parkway and flowering trees.

One of the terrace garden spots in Yonkers.

The Hudson River Museum in Trevor Park, which is serving Yonkers so well and which could be the nucleus for still wider community activities.

Park Hill Terrace, Park View Avenue, Parkway East, and Parkway West.

The Woodland Route is always enjoyable whether in the spring, summer, fall, or winter, as it passes through Grove Street, Forest Street, Woodland Avenue, Woodland Terrace, Woodlawn Avenue, Woodbine Street, Woodford Road, Woods Hole Drive, where one is enveloped in trees of many types such as Ash, Alder, Beech, Birch, Cedar, Chestnut, Cypress, Elm, Hemlock, Holly, Linden, Locust, Maple, Mulberry, Oak, Pine, Poplar, Spruce, Sycamore, Walnut, and Willow. At the edge of these forests of streets there is Edgewood Avenue, on which is found Vine Avenue, Orchard Place, Orchard Street, Vineyard Lane, Vineyard Avenue, and Arbor Street; while skirting the edges are Ashburton, Ashford, Ashland, Ashton, Beech Terrace, Beech Hill, Beechmont, Beechwood, Beecher, Birch Brook, Locust Hill, Hollywood, Oakland, Oakmont, and Oak Bend.

On these roads of Yonkers one can travel over winding Trails, Circles, Ovals, Crescents, Half Moons, U's, Bends, Triangles, Returns, Squares, Rows, Ways, Walks, Byroads, as well as Crossroads, Closes, Courts, Terraces, Places, Lanes, Drives, Streets, Avenues, Boulevards, and Parkways.

There is a New, an Old, a Young, and a Gray Street. There are First and Second Streets, but they are miles apart, with a long jump to 240th Street, 241st Street, and 242nd Street without precedent or explanation.

The Presidential Route covers Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, Fillmore, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Arthur, McKinley, Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, Truman. Along with Roosevelt Street are Franklin, Elinor, James, Elliott, and John. There is Truman Street, as well as Elizabeth and Margaret.

If one is interested in royalty, there are King, Queen, Rex, Regent, Duke, Noble, Royal, Empire. And then there are William, Henry, Stevens, John, Edward, Elizabeth, James,

Charles, Ann, and George, some of which probably derived their titles from the former rulers of England.

There are Dewey, McArthur, Pershing, Sherman, Columbus, Philipse, Hamilton, Perry, Shelly, Lindbergh, Lehman, Lee, Edison, Hancock, Boone, and Webster.

Thirteen states have been honored by travel routes in Yonkers—Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

One also finds Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Oxford, Trinity, Union, Culver, University, Seminary, College, and School Streets. Instead of using the customary street designations, some routes employ their own titles such as Oak Bend, Valley Close, Return Bend, Center Knolls, The Crossway, The Crescent, Sharon Way, Entrance Court, Moquette Row.

There are John, Little John, St. John, and Villa, Cottage, Castle, and Court, along with a Butler, and those with the unique titles of Hunt's Bride Road, Smart Avenue, and Liebig Avenue.

If one is among the lucky forty girls, there is a street named for her:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adele | Elizabeth | Marion | Romaine |
| Alida | Florence | Martha | Rose |
| Ann | Grace | May | Savanna |
| Caroline | Helena | Mildred | Selma |
| Caryl | Henrietta | Minerva | Serena |
| Christine | Juane | Myrtle | Sylvan |
| Clare | June | Patricia | Theresa |
| Clunie | Louise | Paula | Verona |
| Elaine | Madeline | Pearl | Vesta |
| Elinor | Margaret | Priscilla | Virginia |

There are a Ball and a Bell, a Bridge, Dock, Pier, Engine, Factory, Railroad, Market, Mill, Post, Aqueduct, Point, Tower, Arrowhead, and Beacon, all having worth-while histories.

Then there are the Saints—St. Andrew's, St. Eleanora, St.

George, St. James, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Nicholas, St. Mark's, along with Abbey, Convent, Seminary, and Cross, while there are Puritan, Pilgrim, and Plymouth.

Somewhat in contrast, but Wells, Worth their weight in Gold, are others such as Emerald, Crystal, Pearl, Sterling, and Silk.

Someone evidently liked the idea of having a Garden in a Meadow in a Valley by a Brook in May and June, and particularly liked such flowers as Jessamine, Laurel, Astor, Rose, Primrose, Woodbine, Mayflower, and Thistle, although a border of Ivy was used to frame it.

The bugles can be heard as the Hunt begins for Hunt's Bride, and the Hunter starts the Chase for a Fox on an avenue and a Fox on a terrace while also in quest of an Oriole, a Robin, a Bobolink, and a Wren.

Then there are New Avenue, New Place, New Main Street, and Old Jerome Avenue and Old Saw Mill River Road, to contrast with Young Avenue and Gray Place.

There is considerable Indian nomenclature carried over from the past, like Chippewa, Iroquois, Huron, Minnewaska, Cayuga, Winnebago, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Tioga, Pocono, Seneca, Shawnee, Algonquin, Cherokee, Delaware, Massitoa, and Tuckahoe, although most names have been imported rather than left behind by the Weckquaeskecks and Manhattans.

There are the hard names—Boulder, Rock, Stone, Granite—and the ringing names of Bell, Bellevue, Belmont, Belden, Belknap, and Belvedere.

Without mentioning more names, it is seen that the post office and the mail carriers have a real problem, and that, in the confronting circumstances, they are doing a good job. To add to their problem of the similarity of names, many pieces of mail are incorrectly addressed, particularly where only a portion of the street name is used. This point is further emphasized when one considers additional streets, including Gray Cliff Road, Gray Oaks Avenue, Gray Place,

Graystone Place, Graystone Terrace, Greystone Terrace, Greystone Place. And there are Lincoln Avenue, Lincoln Street, Lincoln Circle, Lincoln Terrace; and Lewis Street, Lewis Avenue, Lewis Place, and Lewis Parkway, as well as Bronx Terrace, Bronx Parkway, Bronx River Road, and Bronxville Road. But, despite the similarity of names and occasional incomplete addresses, the postal service carries on and not many Yonkersonians would like the street titles changed. A lively debate could quickly be started were someone to propose a change of designation for even one street.

It would well repay every Yonkersonian—perhaps, say, on some rainy Sunday afternoon—to take a map of the streets of Yonkers, pin it on a near-by wall for close observation, and obtain a bird's-eye view of the unique arrangement of the streets. Allowance must be made, as those who travel the streets well know, for the ridges, hills, and valleys which, from the beginning of time, have been the determining factors both of the route and the direction of many of the streets. While new streets occasionally are added and a few old ones closed, it appears that Yonkers today has about 1185 individual streets covering its 17½ square miles. These form a network extending over a total length of about 270 miles.

In a study of the map it becomes obvious that only two north-south streets and one parkway extend unbroken the entire length of Yonkers—Broadway, Central Park Avenue, and Saw Mill River Parkway. The Bronx River Parkway extends the full length of the city, but in doing so crosses the Yonkers line briefly for a short distance into Mount Vernon, Bronxville, Tuckahoe, and Eastchester as it rambles on its way. It is coincidental that no street or parkway extends the whole width of Yonkers in the east-west direction. Some of the older winding streets follow the routes of the ancient Indian trails, while some follow the old country roads that developed between farms and areas. These routes wandered around hills and through valleys as the area changed from the red man's to the white man's world, and eventually

from the sixty-odd original colonial farms to many smaller farms as they were divided. Finally they became communities.

The longest street in Yonkers is Central Park Avenue, 6½ miles, or, to be exact, 34,170 feet; Broadway is second, about 5 miles in length, or 25,640 feet, of which North Broadway is 17,070 feet and South Broadway 8570 feet. The shortest street is debatable, since there are several not a full block long; thus a matter of inches or feet might be the deciding factor. Since there is no actual record, those streets desirous of that honor can lay claim to it.

The longest-name street is Van Cortlandt Park Avenue; second is Old Saw Mill River Road. The honor for the shortest name is held jointly by Ivy Place, Oak Place, and Rex Place. Twelve street names contain only three letters —Ann, Ash, Dix, Elm (Avenue), Elm (Street), Ivy, Lee (Avenue), Lee (Street), Oak (Street), Oak (Place), Oak (Bend), and Rex.

It would be interesting were it possible to determine which street has the most curves, which is the most curvesome or curvaceous. It should be monumentalized for the benefit of this and future generations. It would be degrading to apply the inelegant term "crooked" to one of Yonkers' historic trails. It would be inappropriate and unexpressive to camouflage these wandering, winding, meandering roads with such bucolic suggestions as sinuous, serpentine, or parabolic. Midland and McLean Avenues could compete with Palmer Road, Yonkers Avenue, Bronxville Road, and others for this honor in the longer-street class. Shonnard Terrace runs west, north, west again, southwest, and south as it slips down the Palisade. It could well enter the curvaceous contest in the short-street class. Shonnard Terrace also forms the handles of a large pair of shears, while Greystone, Windsor, and Arthur form the blades. A rectangle is formed by Holls Terrace north and west and south along with Broadway, while a yet larger rectangle is created when Hudson Terrace is included.

Cecil Crest, The Crossways, and Nostrand form a triangle, while Sunnyside, Beechwood, Fairfield, and Bridge create a circle. Sunnybrook, Hampshire, Glen Washington, Carlton, and Wrexham form a pattern in the shape of a great octopus. Berkeley Avenue forms a half circle as it reaches uphill westerly from Leighton Avenue and easterly downhill back to Leighton. Bobolink forms a "U." Robert Avenue is an arm, while Arden Place, Argyle Terrace, Rock Lane, Robert Lane, Hudson Terrace, and Gilbert Place form the hand and fingers. Pondfield Road West and Dellwood Road fork and then pass around opposite sides of Cedar Knolls for half a mile, where they come together again; but, even so, Pondfield Road West passes on the east side of the hill.

Sprain Road, about 2 miles in length, is the only long street in Yonkers without cross streets, although Warburton Avenue has none for about 1¾ miles of its length.

Central Park Avenue has 62 streets entering or crossing it, Broadway is next with 56, Mile Square Road ranks third with 52, while McLean and Nepperhan Avenues each have 46, Kimball and Yonkers Avenues each 44, and Midland Avenue 37.

Scarsdale Road begins at a bridge over the Bronx River in Yonkers near Tuckahoe, roams through Yonkers for about 3 miles, and ends at another bridge across the Bronx River leading into Scarsdale.

A discussion of Yonkers streets could go on ad infinitum because they create many interesting situations—so much so, in fact, that a practical plan would be for some organization to stage a contest for the selection of streets having certain characteristics that they might be properly marked:

1. The most historic street
2. The most curvaceous street
3. The straightest street
4. The most unique street
5. The oddest grouping of streets
6. The shortest street
7. The narrowest street
8. The most hilly street
9. The most level street
10. The most scenic street
11. The most traveled street
12. The least used street
13. The most uniquely named street
14. The group of streets which form the most unique design

These are only a few suggestions, but such a contest could award a metal signpost to the selected street and a prize for the best suggestion. In furtherance of this idea it would be well for the morale of the city were Yonkers to become famous as the "City with Legends," not only because of the unique design of its street signs, but because of the great number of them. The title of every street has been selected by someone or some group not only to identify it, but in many instances to perpetuate a name. It would, indeed, be appropriate to erect permanent signs at every street intersection, displaying both the legend of its designation and its history. This is something to which residents on each street could contribute were a unified plan developed.

Stone markers were once ordered by Benjamin Franklin (first Postmaster General) placed along the Albany Post Road (Broadway) from New York City through Yonkers to Albany. They were mileposts to guide the post riders and travelers using the slow and tortuous route. They would be valuable markers today, and only a thoughtless public permitted their abandonment when the old route was widened or improved. This is an appeal to every Yonkersonian, and to all others who may know the whereabouts of these old stone mileposts, to report them. In this way it is hoped the originals may be located, to be properly enshrined and preserved on this historic highway. There were hardly more than four within the boundaries of the present Yonkers, although five may have been in place along the curving old country road. One old record indicates that mileposts 19 and 20 were within Yonkers boundaries, but it does not mention the others. If, in time, the originals cannot be located, duplicates could be placed as near the original spots as surveys might indicate and surroundings permit.

Possibly there were milestones on Mile Square Road and other former routes through Yonkers. These also could be restored. It would add interest to the city streets to replace the old stone markers and thus preserve them for the future. The old signposts and the marking of every historic spot and

legend, mentioned in another chapter, plus the local marking stating the history of each street, soon would place Yonkers to the fore as the "City with Legends." With such a program in effect, the streets would be so clearly marked that anyone could travel them with ease. The routes would then become so interesting that not only Yonkersonians but travelers from afar would soon know the many interesting points about the city.

The area now Yonkers had only two main villages or communities in the Indian era, Nappeckamack and Aquehung; and only three, Tuckaho Hills, Mile Square, and Philipsburgh in the English Manor days. There was a long interim before more communities grew up around other centers of attraction. Today there are in Yonkers some forty-odd sections or communities, making up the residential area which surrounds the main business district. They have a mutuality of binding interests, but each has its own traditions and history; and each has its current programs and future plans. Most of the sections would like to maintain their community status and grow and prosper within the boundaries of the city. The residents of each community have selected their area from choice; so it really belongs to them. Yonkers, as a whole, should value the individual community spirit. It should encourage community enterprise and community activities. The city can assist the communities with their plans and programs for "centers of attraction" rather than override them, except for serious reasons. Pride in individual communities will create pride in the city if properly encouraged under a city-wide plan. They are the pillars of Yonkers.

Inasmuch as Yonkers streets lead from community to community, it would be a fine project to equip them with community markers designed and erected by each community under a coordinated plan. The residents of the communities would have their own ideas about their actual borders. But for purposes of general discussion the following is, at least, a partial list of Yonkers communities:

Armour Villa Park, Beech Hill, Beverly Crest, Bronx Hills,

Bronx Manor, Bronxville Heights, Bryn Mawr, Caryl, Cecil Crest, Cedar Knolls, Colonial Heights, Crestwood, Dunwoodie, Edgemont, Empire Park, Fleetwood, Gramatan Hills, Grand View Park, Grassy Sprain, Glenwood, Greystone, Gunther Park, Homecrest, Homefield, Homewood, Kinross Heights, Lawrence Park West, Lincoln Heights, Lincoln Park, Ludlow, Lowerre, Longvale, McLean Heights, Mohegan Heights, Moorelands, Moquette Park, Morsemere, Nepera Park, Nepperhan Heights, Nodine Hill, Park Hill, Runyon Heights, Sherwood Park, Strathmore, The Highlands, Wakefield Park, and Woodstock Park.

As one travels through Yonkers today, the signs most frequently seen in its numerous communities are of the prohibition order, such as "No Parking," "Speed Limit 23 Miles," and "Dead End." Parking space is a problem, but will become less acute in certain areas when more centers of attraction are available in Yonkers to spread the parking needs. The 23-mile speed limit is too slow for many areas and only invites both violation and non-enforcement. "Dead End" is not an encouraging sign to be plastered over a live, wide-awake city. It has an ominous meaning as if daring a person to enter. Possibly "Terminus" or "Return" would be more agreeable to an awakening Yonkers. Another sign might well be placed on some Yonkers streets. A designation of "Sloway" would be appropriate for those streets which follow the winding routes of the old trails as discussed in Chapter 2.

Together with the proposed street signs and historic-spot marking of the city's streets, some coordinated plan is needed to develop more attractive devices for other local purposes. The city should by all means install attractive symbols at all its gateways, particularly on its main-traveled routes. They could spread joy and a sense of welcome besides carrying out the idea of "Ye Olde Younckers." A friendly sign could announce: "Yonkers welcomes you, but please travel safely to save lives. Our speed limit is 23 M.P.H."

There are also many real estate signs merely nailed to

trees in haphazard fashion. Some are glaring yellow and black, others white and red. Most real estate firms are vitally interested in Yonkers and they can do their bit by using unique and dignified devices properly placed to avoid the billboard appearance. Prospective buyers undoubtedly would be more favorably impressed, too.

A study of the map of Yonkers reveals that it requires considerable time and patience to locate the many unusual and interesting situations involving the city's streets, although the people residing on each of them know its uniqueness very well. For that reason only a few of the many streets have been discussed here, mainly with the idea of arousing local public interest in Yonkers and its future situation. Some organization would likely find considerable interest existing among Yonkersonians in a contest that would award a worth-while prize for the best poem or song dealing with the "Streets of Yonkers" through the use of the beguiling nomenclature of its many traffic channels. This would encourage people to know Yonkers better. It should be an interesting and not too difficult game with over one thousand street names to draw from.

Many Yonkers streets, when viewed on a map, assume varied shapes, figures, and designs such as trees, animals, heads, fish, and other objects. To provide further study of Yonkers streets, a contest could be staged for school children, who could sketch from a map their ideas of the most unique or instructive designs. It would be wise for Yonkersonians to begin now to know their streets and city better, that they may the more enjoy their unusual surroundings. Nothing would help more effectively than contests of the type suggested. Yonkers soon would have better streets, more appropriate signs, and an improved character, and would be a better place in which to live.

Yonkers enjoys a strategic location in relation to the world beyond its borders as well as a protected situation within its borders, both of which must be preserved. The entire Yon-

kers area, by a combination of water, ridges, hills, parkways, and railroads, is, in effect, an isolated "island" having only a few points where traffic crosses its boundaries. Along the eastern boundary the Bronx River for 6½ miles forms a formidable line. Somewhat surprising it is that only 14 street routes pass over this barrier, only 6 being main routes.

Yonkers has a total of 76 roads or streets leading either to the Bronx River or to the parkway along that river. Thus it is apparent that 62 of these roadways are effectively estopped or obligingly end either at the river or at the latter's parkway. In 1785 this river barrier was crossed in only three places, as indicated on the map of that year. Noteworthy is the fact that, after 165 years of progress and expansion made in and between populated areas, there are only 14 crossings of the stream existing today. The Bronx River still remains a major line and barrier, owing partly to its location along and under a high ridge and partly because of the parkway, with its roadway on one side and the Harlem Division railroad on the other. These factors have in later years tended to form a quadruple barrier.

On the west of the Yonkers area is the mighty Hudson River, more than a mile wide, forming a barrier over which there is no highway. The only egress is by way of the Yonkers Ferry to Alpine, New Jersey. The railroad along the river shore completely blocks off the streets of Yonkers, so that over the city's 4⅓-mile river frontage only a dozen streets out of a possible hundred which might reach to the water's edge actually do so, owing to a combination of the high ridge, some large estates, the railroad, and a lack of public incentive and initiative to improve the situation.

The southern boundary of Yonkers, which is the New York City northern line, holds interest because two thirds of the line marks the boundary of Van Cortlandt Park. There are 24 Yonkers streets which reach to the line without crossing it, while only 13 streets and roadways cross the line along its 3-mile length. Of these only 6 are main arteries. A com-

bination of hills and parks, plus a city line, actually create a barrier line. Interesting also to note is that such routes as De Pyster Street, Ellsworth Avenue, Caryl Avenue, McLean Avenue, Forest Avenue, and Parkway North extend along this boundary for about half its length to help form the barrier.

On the north only 18 roads or streets cross the 4-mile Yonkers boundary line, of which 7 are highways. A series of ridges, large estates, major acreage for institutions, and the Grassy Sprain Reservoir combine to isolate the "island" on the north. A map of Yonkers reveals this peculiar situation, and a study of it discloses some of the past history of the city, much of which developed and expanded around areas of attraction, but without a coordinated plan. This "island" situation, however, gives Yonkers some degree of isolation for its residential sections, and is undoubtedly a present-day asset and advantage in the protection of its many communities against the inroads of through traffic.

However, it does seem that the beautiful Hudson water front should be developed in order to create much-needed space for an expanding city rather than permit the valuable area to remain stymied both by the railroad and by a lack of fill-in and of construction work there. In an expansion move along the Yonkers water front more streets would be given access to the river. The water front then could become a worth-while addition to the city.

A traveler along the streets of Yonkers is impressed by, and usually marvels, if not too engrossed in the scenery, at the many miles of gray stone walls that greet the eyes in every direction. Some are works of art, having been built many years ago from carefully selected stones permanently sealed together, with every seam rounded off to perfection. These walls will last for ages and remain as monuments, not only to those who had them built, but to the skill of Yonkers workmen of the past. It is a desecration of the memories of those early builders of a finer and better Yonkers, and

of Yonkers itself, when one of these historic walls is removed. Someday they will be appreciated even more than they are today. There are no available figures on the number of miles covered by these walls, but the distance will run high, particularly if the numerous additional retaining walls built to create terraces, gardens, and driveways are included.

Some of the walls are cemented, but many were built by the careful fitting of stone upon stone, without a binder—an art in itself—and they will remain intact for centuries. These walls are of immense value, not only because of their replacement cost but also by reason of the labor involved. Only a guess could be ventured concerning the number of blocks of stone that have gone into the walls of Yonkers; but the figure would run into millions, especially were the foundations of houses included. There probably would be enough stones to build more pyramids in Yonkers than Egypt contains. It is estimated that 2,300,000 blocks of stone are in the largest Egyptian pyramid, about 450 feet high and 746 feet square at its base. In the language of the Indians of Keskeskeck, such a pyramid in Yonkers would represent a large "wa-wa-na-quas-sick" (group of memorial stones). The Great Pyramid and all Egyptian pyramids were built by slave labor at the cost of many human lives, while the Yonkers walls were erected either by well-paid free labor or by the property owners themselves with their own hands, and these artisans infused into their walls the spirit of love of home and the desire for a Yonkers Beautiful.

The Walls of Yonkers should be one of the "Seven Wonders of Yonkers," together with the Hudson River, Palisades, Manor House, and "underground rivers." The other two wonders are purposely left open for debate and adoption. Yonkers can take the lead over any American city in the 200,000 population class for the title of the "City of Many Walls." The Great Pyramid Cheops in Egypt is supposed to have been built in the year 3000 B.C., or 4950 years ago. It is evident that these local walls of granite stone could, if not

removed, remain in Yonkers for the next 5000 years and longer, for neither the atomic nor the hydrogen bomb could powder or evaporate them. The walls, if undisturbed, could stand as a memorial to a great past, as protection against future erosion and as a solid part of the present "Terrace City." The oldest permanent wall in Yonkers should be located and dedicated, to preserve it. Those who might be inclined to destroy these fine landmarks should think twice before doing so and make a real effort to preserve them.

While on this general subject, there are also, as any Yonkersonian knows, several million steps in the city, mainly constructed of stone. These steps not only lead from the streets up to famous terraces but, in many instances, down to the houses on the lower side. They are snow-catching devices and good for exercise in more ways than one. There are some Yonkersonians who enjoy the breezes and views gained from the altitudinous routes, and who like to shovel snow and let the leaves blow down to lower levels; while there are other citizens who prefer the calm and quiet of the valleys, worry little about snow, steps, terraces, or high places, and calmly burn the leaves in the autumn as did the Indians of old.

Travelers along the streets of Yonkers irresistibly pause as they arrive at certain places along the way where some high spot shows a view of the hills beyond or the valley beneath or where some low spot offers a rustic scene along a river and its valley, sometimes with the hills beyond. There are many such irresistible places in Yonkers, for it is blessed with much scenic beauty. From these many places, Yonkersonians can view the entire city if they reach the proper spots. Every Yonkersonian should visit the Leslie Sutherland Park in the Park Hill section. It is interesting to approach it from Park Hill Avenue, over Undercliff and Overcliff Streets. From this view-park one is suddenly faced

with a breath-taking scene. All of southwest Yonkers is far below this high bluff, and the Hudson and its Palisades form a majestic background for an unusual scene. If one wants to secure a "feel" of the great height, the park can be reached from South Broadway by a steep climb up Undercliff Street.

With this small view-park as an example, at least twenty-five more should be built in various sections of the city. Not much space would be required if they were placed at the proper points. From twenty-five such view-parks, Yonkersonians could see their city as they would see it in no other way. These view-parks should be properly mapped and publicized so that Yonkersonians and visitors could travel from one to the other on a "view-Yonkers tour." Each view-park could memorialize some historic spot in the area or some worth-while event. The residents of each area could select not only the location but also the name for it. The location, of course, should be carefully selected for view, space and accessibility.

There is a glorious view from Palmer Road near Halladay Avenue to the south down Tibbetts Valley, with the skyscrapers of New York in the distance. There is another from Fortfield Reservoir and still another from Nodine Hill with the water tower as an observation post. There are other grand views from Robert Avenue looking east over Sprain and Grassy Sprain Ridge, from Westminster Drive looking west over the Saw Mill River Valley and the great ridge beyond. There is a grand view from Colonial Heights, both east and west. There are views from Valentine Hill and from Hill View Reservoir.

There are beautiful views of the Hudson at lower levels from Valentine Lane and Sunnyside Drive and from Warburton Avenue.

The important thing is to select carefully the best locations for view-parks in all sections of the city, prepare them for use and accessibility, and make known their locations

so that people can find them. There are many Yonkersonians who have not visited the marvelous Sutherland view-park, and many others who do not even know of its existence. Yonkersonians would soon know more about their city and take greater pride in its scenic beauty if they could see it as it is from these view-parks.

# 14

## Trees and Things

ONE cannot pass through Yonkers' tree-lined streets without reminiscing over the great white-oak forests which at one time covered the area. Today a few of the original trees remain here as the only living contact with the ancient Indian era when the Weckquaeskecks and the Manhattans made it their happy hunting ground. The large, tasty acorns —the fruit of these great trees—were in abundant supply and furnished food for squirrels, chipmunks, and a myriad of small animals. Thousands of wild boars and larger animals feasted and waxed fat on acorns more plentiful than they could eat. Flocks of wild turkeys, pigeons, and birds of many types found food in abundance and a paradise in which to live.

It is unfortunate that, with the passing of time and the coming of a new civilization, many of these great trees fell under the woodman's ax, while others gradually perished from age owing to their inability to subsist on the rocky substrata of the region without the refertilization properties provided in the forests by nature. One by one those noble trees still standing are disappearing. That means that soon none of the ancient growth dating back to the Indian era will remain here. Many of the larger specimens were lost in 1949. Some were blown down by high winds as the result of insecure footing; some succumbed to weakness due to decay; others were cut down without considering either their great age or their value to the community. It would be a splendid idea were some organization, in cooperation with

the owners of the original forest trees, to legend them so as to encourage the preservation of these ancient arboreal treasures.

The largest of the original specimens is the famous Odell Tree located on Odell Avenue. That designation is given it here in honor of the old trail passing close by it. This veteran white oak, a landmark for many years, measures about 264 inches in circumference at its base, has some limbs the size of 300-year-old trees, and breast-high—about 4 feet—above the ground measures 200 inches in circumference. Many people drive off the road to pause in its beneficent shadow while communing with the oldest living thing in the area.

Located near the fourteenth tee of the Hudson River Country Club, the Odell Tree is a noble example of a perfect work of nature. Indian children doubtlessly played in its shadows, and many exciting tales of wild-animal fights, bird battles on its spreading branches, Indian duels, and warfare between tribes could be recounted by this arboreal giant could it speak. It has lived to a great age and has seen its companions of the forest fall one by one as the winds, lightning, storms, cold, and disease have taken their toll. The Odell Tree seems quite alone, for none of its generation within several hundred years of its age is extant. Across a small valley stand several children and grandchildren on whom the Odell Tree gazes with pride, for they too are growing up into majestic trees.

The Odell Tree's precise age is unknown. It seems impossible to determine the life span of an old tree without actually felling it; but various estimates place it between 600 and 1000 years. This tree was an Indian landmark 400 years ago. It was old when Columbus discovered America 458 years ago. It seems to be the most elderly tree in Yonkers and one of the oldest in Westchester County. It is the only living thing in Yonkers that might date back a thousand

years to 950 A.D. If the chart-basis shown later is used, the Odell Tree is around 900 years old.

The Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company, in recent years, added fame to the Odell Tree, when the venerable oak provided the inspiration for that organization's national advertising campaign conducted for Chesterfield cigarettes, in which was featured the slogan, "Tall oaks from little acorns grow." A large tree was sketched and shown on posters over the entire nation.

The grimaces of the old tree can be imagined when workmen were laying asphalt and stone over its roots; also its disgust when a wire fence was fastened to its broad trunk to separate the highway from the golf course. It is small wonder that sometimes it manifests a fretful mood and its limbs reach for the high-hit balls while its trembling roots 'neath the tee give golfers the jitters. It is fortunate that this tree cannot record the many remarks it has heard as golfers teed off under its branches. At times it seems somewhat worn and thin as if sizzled by too much fiery conversation on the one side and too much speeding traffic on the other. Indian spirits are still hovering around within its branches, sometimes displaying resentment over the noisy intrusion. With devilish delight these "injun" sprites put an Indian sign on the helpless golfers, causing them to hook and slice. These adumbral wraiths then smile with glee when they hear the usual "Palefaced" alibis. It is a temperamental tee for a fine golf hole with a beautiful green in the distance nestling on the bank of a small lake.

The next largest white oak appears to be the Fanshaw Tree at the intersection of Fanshaw and Leighton Avenues. This great veteran stands directly in the middle of Fanshaw Avenue, encircled by a stone curb for its protection. Several years ago important and necessary steps were taken to preserve this landmark, which is now a noble monument to those who saved it and a worthy living example of how a

great old tree can be rescued from human destruction. This fine specimen is 194 inches in circumference measured at a point 4 feet above the ground. If its age is figured by the estimation scale shown later, it is around 875 years old. The Fanshaw Tree doubtlessly was a part of the old forests covering the area in the Indian days, and may have been 400 years old when Columbus discovered America.

There are other grand specimens ranging around 140 inches in circumference on Hudson Terrace, in Grant Park, near Yonkers General Hospital, on Palisade Avenue, on Holls Terrace, and on Park Avenue. Several trees around these sizes are in the Park Hill area, on Scarsdale Road, and in other sections of the city.

The largest of the original trees remaining in Aquehung are in Armour Villa Park, Bronx Manor, Cedar Knolls, and Moorelands. The three oldest trees are about 216 inches in circumference at the ground and about 140 inches when measured 4 feet above the ground. They are located in the yards at the corner of Pondfield Road West and Chatfield Road, on Dellwood Road opposite Ellison Place, and on Moore Road near Hampshire Road. The Dellwood Tree had many of its roots cut several years ago by the "wheels of progress," when the old trail around Cedar Knolls was modernized into the present Dellwood Road. The tree lost a number of large lower branches during the years of adjustment, but has continued to beautify the landscape and live on for the sheer joy of living. Four years ago some blight or disease turned its leaves black and it was almost lost, but proper feeding, treatment, and amputation of additional lower limbs finally restored its vigor. Its age is unknown; but it is one of those trees that, in the far long ago, was a part of the great white-oak forest.

Authorities seem in agreement that there is no exact method of determining the age of a tree except by cutting it down and counting the growth rings. An approximate age can be estimated by boring into the tree with an increment

borer, which is difficult because of the toughness of the wood. However, there are records made of cut-down white-oak trees that throw some light on their general age in relation to diameter. But authorities point out that tree growth varies greatly from tree to tree even in the same area, and the variation may be greater as between areas. It is also difficult to measure large trees with accuracy because their shapes vary and the ground level slopes around the base of some of them.

Many factors enter into the rapidity growth of a tree, all of which individually and collectively make it difficult to estimate its age. The older the tree, the less accurate an estimate can be. Its location, whether in a shady crowded forest or in the open, whether in good or poor soil including the substrata, the geographical situation, climatic conditions, and such items, too numerous and too technical in detail to consider here, are important factors entering into the diameter growth per year of the trunk of a tree.

Worthy of mention is the fact that the white oak (*Quercus alba*) is one of the slowest-growing trees and the wood is one of the toughest and hardest known varieties. Among thirty-six well-known varieties of trees only one, the beech, is slower growing; but the beech neither lives as long nor reaches the majestic proportions of the white oak. By comparison the red oak, which grows extensively in the Yonkers area, has a rapidity growth about 30 per cent faster than the white oak. The largest red oak known in Yonkers is a great specimen on Underhill Street, near the Asbury Church. It is about 190 inches in circumference 4 feet above the ground and truly a landmark. George Washington passed under the branches of this great tree, as did his army as it plodded cautiously down the steep winding trail on its way to White Plains in 1776. This tree, which is probably around 600 years old, was undoubtedly an added attraction that encouraged the early pioneers to select the site in its shadows for the Asbury Church 153 years ago.

| Size in. | Source 1 | | | Source 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dia. | Age yrs. | 1″ in yrs. | No. stumps | Age yrs. | 1″ in yrs. | No. stumps |
| 1″ | 9 | 9 | — | 11 | 11 | — |
| 2 | 18 | 9 | — | 21 | 10 | — |
| 3 | 26 | 8 | 1 | 31 | 10 | — |
| 4 | 35 | 9 | 1 | 41 | 10 | — |
| 5 | 44 | 9 | 4 | 52 | 11 | 1 |
| 6 | 53 | 9 | 1 | 62 | 10 | 6 |
| 7 | 62 | 9 | 4 | 72 | 10 | 4 |
| 8 | 71 | 9 | 3 | 82 | 10 | 7 |
| 9 | 80 | 9 | 6 | 93 | 11 | 15 |
| 10 | 89 | 9 | 7 | 104 | 11 | 16 |
| 11 | 98 | 9 | 6 | 115 | 11 | 17 |
| 12 | 107 | 9 | 9 | 124 | 9 | 17 |
| 13 | 116 | 9 | 10 | 138 | 14 | 21 |
| 14 | 124 | 8 | 29 | 145 | 7 | 13 |
| 15 | 133 | 9 | 37 | 161 | 16 | 13 |
| 16 | 142 | 9 | 77 | 173 | 12 | 7 |
| 17 | 151 | 9 | 54 | 184 | 11 | 9 |
| 18 | 160 | 9 | 40 | 196 | 12 | 11 |
| 19 | 169 | 9 | 26 | 209 | 13 | 12 |
| 20 | 179 | 10 | 48 | 222 | 13 | 12 |
| 21 | 188 | 9 | 44 | 234 | 12 | 16 |
| 22 | 198 | 10 | 59 | 248 | 14 | 9 |
| 23 | 208 | 10 | 99 | 262 | 14 | 13 |
| 24 | 219 | 11 | 82 | 275 | 13 | 13 |
| 25 | 230 | 11 | 90 | 285 | 10 | 7 |
| 26 | 242 | 12 | 69 | 304 | 19 | 5 |
| 27 | 255 | 13 | 66 | 320 | 16 | 6 |
| 28 | 268 | 13 | 58 | 336 | 16 | 8 |
| 29 | 282 | 14 | 48 | 353 | 17 | 6 |
| 30 | 298 | 16 | 34 | 369 | 16 | 3 |
| 31 | 313 | 15 | 16 | 386 | 17 | 2 |
| 32 | 328 | 15 | 29 | 404 | 18 | — |
| 33 | 345 | 17 | 16 | 422 | 18 | — |
| 34 | 361 | 16 | 10 | 440 | 18 | 1 |
| 35 | 379 | 18 | 10 | — | — | — |

The chart shown here was prepared from several sources. The figures are not presented as an accurate chart on which to base the age of any particular tree. The data, however, do represent actual growth records of individual trees. The chart is presented only for general information purposes, in order to give the reader some idea of the age of white oaks

| Source 3 | | | Source 4 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age yrs. | 1″ in yrs. | No. stumps | Age yrs. | 1″ in yrs. | No. stumps |
| 9 | 9 | Average rings of 300 used. | 8 | 8 | Average rings of 300 used. |
| 18 | 9 | | 16 | 8 | |
| 27 | 9 | | 24 | 8 | |
| 36 | 9 | | 32 | 8 | |
| 45 | 9 | | 40 | 8 | |
| 54 | 9 | | 48 | 8 | |
| 63 | 9 | | 56 | 8 | |
| 72 | 9 | | 64 | 8 | |
| 81 | 9 | | 72 | 8 | |
| 90 | 9 | | 80 | 8 | |
| 99 | 9 | | 88 | 8 | |
| 108 | 9 | | 96 | 8 | |
| 117 | 9 | | 104 | 8 | |
| 126 | 9 | | 112 | 8 | |
| 135 | 9 | | 120 | 8 | |

Source 1. Shows actual count of growth rings of 1093 stumps when an original forest was cut down in an area east of the Mississippi River in the year 1901.

Source 2. The same data from a forest in another area with 270 stumps in the year 1901.

Source 3. Data from an eastern area for about 300 stumps, but using averages of ring growth on various size trees 15″ and less in diameter, but in an area selected for poor soil.

Source 4. Same as No. 3 except that the area was selected for good soil.

based on the diameter of their trunks measured about 4 feet above the ground.

1. From Sources 1 and 2 it seems evident that the growth of these trees slows down with age. In Source 1 it begins at about 22″ and 198 years. In Source 2 the change of growth is rather erratic at about 150 years of age. Whether

trees have a change of life period or such results are due to wet and dry season or disease epidemics is left to the experts to decide.

2. The study of these old records is fascinating. Source 2, it is noted, shows there were 5 trees 26″ in diameter which took 19 years to grow 1″ in diameter. These trees were cut down in the year 1901. So it is interesting to surmise what happened in the years from 1597 to 1616 to slow down their growth to this extent. Evidently something else happened in the years 1756 to 1763 to speed the growth to 1″ in 7 years for the 13 trees which were 14″ in diameter. Ancient history might well be written from a study of the records of old trees, but unfortunately very few records have been kept.

3. The number of stumps excites interest because the bulk of the forest in Source 1 was between 14″ diameter and 30″. There was a sharp decline in the number of trees, beginning with 99 trees having 23″ diameter, age 208 years, down to only 10 trees that had reached 35″ in diameter. Other data show that in this same forest there was only one tree of 44″ diameter, one 42″, three 41″, and one 40″. Using the oldest tree as a guide, this forest probably began in the year 1525.

Disturbing news is coming from the Midwest concerning a new blight or fungus reported to be destroying in its path oak trees of all sizes and types. To date there is no known remedy or antidote to save the trees and the disease is said to be spreading east at an alarming rate, probably fifty miles per year. Yonkersonians will live in hopes that some remedy will be found to arrest this disease before it strips their beautiful city of its highly prized ancient leaf-and-bark landmarks. It will be a national calamity if the great oak forests of the country are destroyed. The wood is valuable, even from younger trees, not alone for furniture, but for many important industrial uses. Yonkersonians might be able to minimize the shock and save many of their trees by using the intervening time to feed and nourish them to insure

resistance to disease. Particularly is it urgent to protect these original-growth trees which must be preserved.

The Dellwood Tree, previously mentioned, is about 141 inches in circumference, or 45 inches in diameter measured 4 feet above the ground. Using Source 1 as 379 years for 35″ and the rate of growth as 1″ in 18 years (growth rate for 35″ tree), it only requires multiplying the 10″ additional by 18 to get 180 years more, or a total age of 559 years. If the growth continued to slow down between 35″ and 45″, as shown by Source 1 between 25″ and 35″, then the age of this tree would be about 40 years more, or about 600 years old. Based on Source 2, using 34″ as 440 years and 11″ more at 18 years per inch makes 198 years additional, or a total of 638 years. If the slow-down scale is used over 34″, the Dellwood Tree would be about 700 years of age.

Source 3 shows about the same basis as Source 1 up to 15″ diameter and tends to substantiate the figures in Source 1. Source 4 shows that trees on good soil grew about 10 per cent faster than those on poor soil. Based on these data, the Dellwood Tree would be about 550 years old on the slow-down basis. The average of these sources is well over 500 years. Whether this tree is 700, 600, or even 500 years old is not too important to this story. That it had its beginning as an acorn prior to the discovery of America by Columbus 458 years ago is evident. It could have been over 300 years of age when Chief Sepham sold it, with his broad lands, to Frederick Philipse in 1684. The tree has had a long and useful career.

One must find it both difficult and illogical not to believe in a Higher Power while one is seated in the benign shadows of a venerable historic tree like this Dellwood monarch of the ancient forest. He must ponder the unsolved question of how and why a small acorn, after falling to the ground, can eventually take root and, in season, sprout a tiny sprig that soon begins to grow. It is no mere accident that these tiny roots absorb food and moisture from the soil to provide

water and sustenance to the sprout, that it may thrive and develop into a tree. It is marvelous how, in order to obtain nourishment, roots push deeper and deeper into the ground, spreading out in every direction to match the length of the tree's branches, or total spread. Sturdily and resolutely the tree stands and defies the rigors of winter and the droughts and heat of summer while, at the same time, fighting off insect pests and disease.

To watch new buds form and see them open and turn green as they expand into large leaves to absorb sunshine, moisture, and air to permit the tree to live and grow is to behold a natural miracle. Almost human seems the tree in the autumn as it prepares itself for winter; the sap drops down into the roots, the leaves fall off to supply protective coverage to the roots, and the same leaves eventually rot to become food again to nourish the tree for the next year. Such a phenomenon does not just happen; nature alone could not perform such seeming miracles. Science is now delving into the secrets of this mysterious transformation process, and if natural scientists, fired by inspired ambition, are able to reveal the incredible workings of nature they may solve the problems not only of the perfect human diet and world food supply, but, in addition, may discover the secret of tree longevity.

It would be impossible to travel the tree-lined streets of Yonkers without becoming interested in the rocky formation on which these great trees grow. The rock and formations here have made it difficult in many instances to construct new roads and streets. The formation has gelogical interest, particularly the foreign rocks which seem to have been deposited here in the Glacial Age. Some geologists have argued at length concerning the character of the rocky formation in this section. According to Shonnard:

> "The rocks of Westchester County consist mainly of gneiss and mica-schist of many dissimilar varieties, and white crystalline limestone with thin interlying beds of serpentine, all of ancient origin and entirely devoid of fossils."

Some geologists seem to feel that the rocks of the Yonkers-Westchester area belong to the Upper Silurian Age, others suggest the Lower Silurian Age, while still more accept the Laurentian Age. All sources seem to agree that the rocky formation originally lay horizontally and at a later date was pushed up or erupted into a perpendicular position. The formation is interspersed here and there with beds of marble which in certain areas come to the surface. Authorities seem to agree that the age of these rocks will never be determined with any accuracy at this time, but it is evident that the Yonkers area offers a field for study and debate for those who like to delve into the past.

The topographical features of Yonkers are interesting as well as instructive. The high ridges in most instances are composed of hard rock or granite, while the valleys have been created by the erosion and washing out of the softer shale or limestone between these hard layers. These ridges and valleys lie parallel in a general north-south direction. To some extent they have modified and influenced the type of growth and the general development of the several communities that make up Yonkers.

In the ornithological and zoological field, Yonkers is similar to Westchester County and the surrounding area. It would require a full volume to do credit to the subject. There are hundreds of varieties of birds, many of which are beneficial to the gardens of the city. A study of these birds and their habits is a worth-while pastime. Birds add much to the pleasure and happiness of the people. It would be well to feed them and encourage them to remain, for everyone would miss their activity and their songs of cheer and happiness—and last but not least, it is important for them to keep the insect family under control.

In Yonkers there are probably more than 100 kinds of spiders, several thousand types of beetles, several hundred varieties of butterflies, and many types of bees, wasps, and ants. There are several hundred types of flies, bugs, grasshoppers, roaches, and such things. There are locusts, mos-

quitoes, katydids (katydidn'ts and katy-never-dids scraping their nocturnal rasps), praying mantes, and many varieties of worms. There are literally millions of them even with the bird population living on them, so it is not difficult to visualize what might happen without these feathered friends. Some insects feed on others, some are beneficial in the yards and gardens, while others feed on humans and could be happily dispensed with. The surprising thing is that with millions of them around, not many are seen at any one time. Nature has a way of providing excessive numbers and then enemies to destroy them, with one species living on the other. It is only one more of the imponderables of an unknown world.

The Yonkers area, being close to the great port of New York, is subject to invasion from new types of insects from year to year as they come in on ships from abroad. The interesting point is that some of these foreign pests, after arrival, spread rapidly as the Japanese beetle did, because they are new to this area and there are no enemies to control them. In due time, however, Nature seems to take care of the situation; but Yonkersonians can at times help themselves in the protection of their gardens by the timely application of sprays when the situation warrants it.

The soils of Yonkers are comprised of the products of erosion and decay of the original igneous rocks. This debris and disintegration of granite, feldspar, mica, and quartz added to residual soils and clays constitutes a soil combination containing many important ingredients favorable to the growth of plant life. The soils are in general acid and require at intervals the addition of lime and magnesium for the best results. The elevation and excellent drainage of the Yonkers area as a whole create a favorable situation for the abundant growth of a remarkably varied flora. In round numbers there are probably over 1000 species of flowering plants in Yonkers.

Dr. John M. Arthur of Boyce Thompson Institute interest-

ingly points out that within the boundaries of Yonkers itself there is a difference in the length of the growing season. He says: "The southern and western portions of the area have a milder or more temperate climate than the northern and eastern portions, with the result that less tolerant species and varieties of plants persist only in the southern and western sections."

Hence, it is understandable why the gardens of Yonkers are so beautiful and why the valleys and hillsides are covered with diversified trees and plants. The gardens of the city as a unit could well be one of its Seven Wonders. Its terrace gardens rival the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; its rock gardens, with geological backgrounds formed of glacial stones, create not only artistic flowering settings but spots of geological interest; its sunken gardens, with their mystic loveliness, blend with the greensward of the valleys.

Within these various gardens are many nooks and corners of every conceivable type, harmonizing with natural environments and permitting human hands and ingenuity to create beauty spots almost rivaling the perfection of Mother Nature. The rich prehistoric soil created here in past centuries produces in these garden spots blooms of unusual size and exquisite color. While Yonkers once was an ancient Indian paradise, with a wild, rugged setting of forests carpeted with native flowers of varied hues, it is today a flowering paradise, a combination of the art of man and nature.

There are no actual figures available, but it is not difficult to conclude, after a tour of Yonkers, that there are 100,000 flowering trees and many times that number of flowering shrubs. There are thousands of climbing roses adding a touch of softness to the masonry walls, while wisteria, the ancient Chinese vine, seems to thrive well within these ancient community borders. It is easy to conclude that there are a million tulip bulbs and many more of various types ready to add their individual and collective glory to the local flora picture annually.

As spring comes "around the corner," Yonkers awakens as if by magic. Mother Nature has not yet disclosed to mere humans how she creates such perfect fragrant blossoms, nor does she tell from whence they come. Nature flaunts her handiwork, flowering Yonkers in triumph as the city presents wave upon wave of its bursting vernal glory for all to behold. The crocuses and snowdrops sometimes push their heads above the snow in their seeming anxiety to be the first to begin the great floral show that includes a kaleidoscopic profusion of golden bells, jonquils, daffodils, narcissus, fruit-tree blossoms, tulips, dogwoods, azaleas, and numerous other examples of Nature's superiority over mere man as a creator of the beautiful.

Yonkers takes on renewed life annually as its 500,000 birds, returning home to join the hardy pioneers, begin to sing, warble, and chirp in its half million trees bursting into new leaf; when its 50,000 squirrels begin to cavort about, clamber up and down trees, bounding hither, thither, and yon seeking hidden food; when an equal number of chipmunks begin to dig a million holes, teasing the armies of cats and dogs which ceaselessly chase them. It is an enchanted, glowing world when the sun reflects a glint from these multitudinous hues and tints. When the bees begin to work, as provided by Mother Nature, Yonkersonians, not to be outdone by the busy membranous-winged insects, bring out their tools, roll up their sleeves, and start creating more nooks and beauty spots in the natural Garden of Yonkers.

The John Burroughs Garden Club of Yonkers has adopted the pink dogwood as it flowering tree. Each member must own at least one and is urged to plant more. There could be no better plan for beautifying the city.

There is an old hallowed legend of the dogwood tree worth repeating here. It alleges that in ancient times this tree was of the same size as other large forest growths. It was considered so firm and strong that at the time of the Crucifixion it was chosen as the timber for the Cross. The

dogwood tree, according to the legend, was greatly distressed at being chosen for so cruel a purpose, and Jesus, in His great pity for all forms of sorrow and suffering, declared to it that never again should a dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a cross; that it should be slender, gentle, and twisted; its blossoms should be in the form of a cross; the center of the outer edge of each petal should be nailprints brown with rust and stained with red, while the center of the flower should be a crown of thorns so that all who saw it would remember what it represented.

The Luther Burbank Garden Club, for the glory of Yonkers, has beautified the parkway center of Rumsey Road with flowering cherry trees. This is an outstanding example of what can be done. The small community of Cedar Knolls, in 1949, planted 5000 new tulip bulbs to add to those already there in an attempt to create a tulip center. Doubtlessly, similar programs have been developed in other sections, all of which are for the betterment of Yonkers. But there still remain many opportunities to beautify more streets and to create more centers. Possibly other clubs and organizations will adopt the idea and assist in the conversion of Yonkers into a veritable modern Garden of Eden.

It can well become a matter of community pride and of city pride to participate in such ambitious plans, and it is to be hoped that not only will individual gardens be made to vie with each other, but likewise Yonkers communities, areas, and streets. Yonkers will become a better place in which to live as every new flower blooms within its expansive borders.

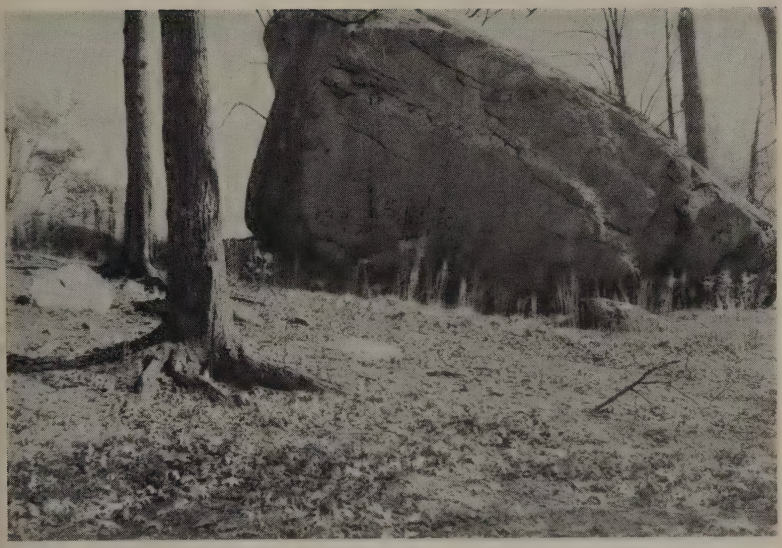
The Indian denizens of Keskeskeck lived simply but well, because food was plentiful. The Tuckah, which was quite popular, grew wild in the lowlands. The red men enjoyed their maize or corn as well as fruit and berries. There was a wide choice of animal meat, including rabbits, opossum, deer, and bear; but for their banquets or feast days dog meat was most favored. If one were selecting the most popular dish of these early Yonkersonians, it would be a

question whether it was the Tuckah with its peculiar flavor and good food value, or ground corn. The latter, when moistened and cooked on hot stones, was called "noohik," and when prepared as porridge or pap was called "sapsis" by some and "dundare" by others (literally "boiled bread"). Noohik, to the white settlers, became known as "nocake" or "hoecake."

The popularity of food varies in an area according to the likes and dislikes of the people. It is usually based on their previous habits and environments. In colonial days the farmers in this area were colonists from many nations of the world, so their food tastes varied. The same is true today, for there are people living in Yonkers who came originally from every state in the Union; also those whose ancestors came from every country and race. It would be of interest to know the most popular dish in Yonkers today.

Boston is proud of its baked beans, Maine of its potatoes and lobsters. New England and the West disagree over how to make apple pie. New Orleans loves its Creole dishes. The South is famed for fried chicken. Long Island has its duckling, while New York seems to like them all. A quick survey of some Yonkers homes discloses fifty different choices; therefore they do not settle the question of the typical Yonkers dish. Sapsis, or spoon bread, will bridge the gap from Indian days to the present time, having been popular through the ages, and it tastes as good whether made from Indian, Dutch, English, or American corn. But possibly there is a more popular dish with less tradition, and, if so, Yonkers might make it famous.

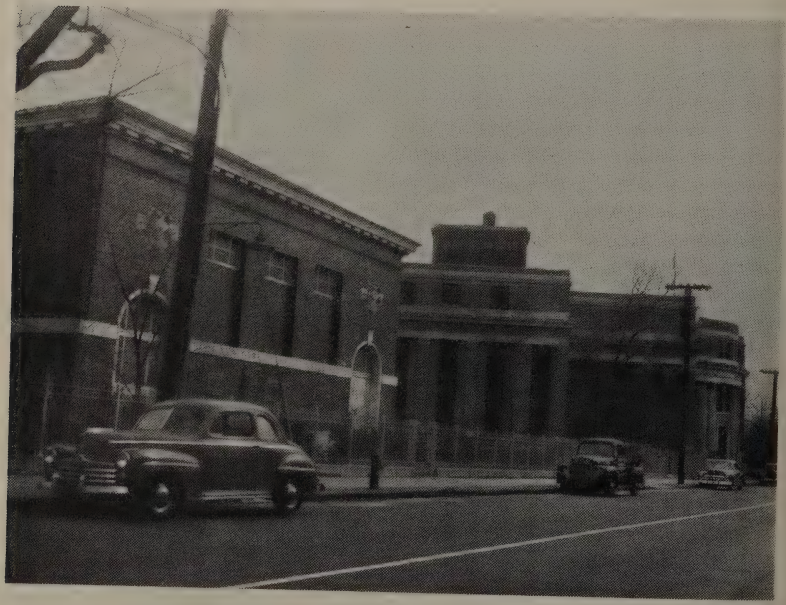
While food is probably the most popular topic of serious conversation among humans, the weather is the subject most frequently discussed casually. With both eyes and ears shut one can audibly project into space the assertion, "It is hot today." And someone else, without bothering to notice from whence came the voice, will subconsciously release the animated reply, "Yes, but yesterday was even



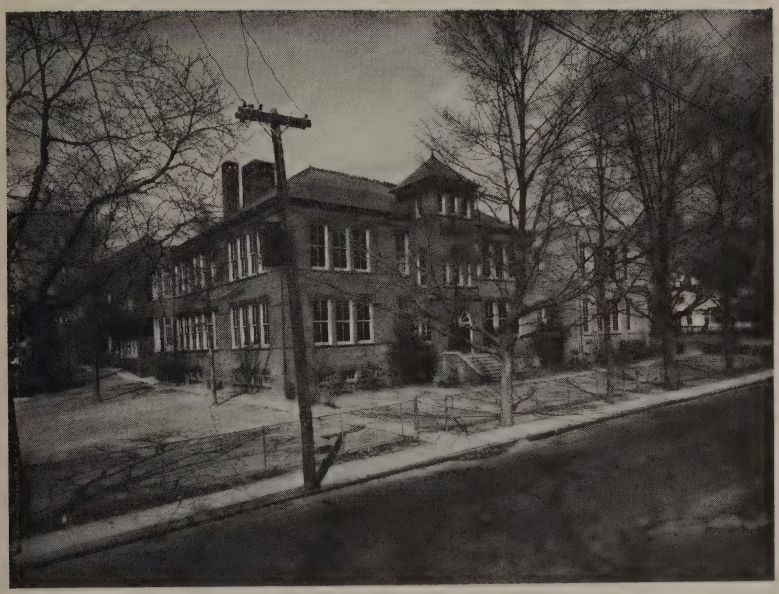
The Aquehung Boulder on Midland Avenue near Wrexham Road.

The junction of the old trails, now Midland Avenue and Mile Square Road.

The Administration Building of Sarah Lawrence College—one of its several attractive buildings.

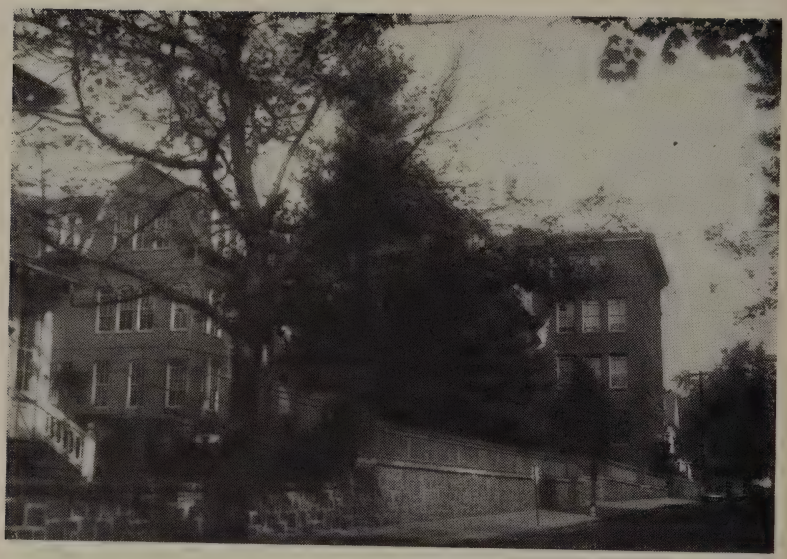


A view on Palmer Road. In the foreground is the modern building for the down shaft to the Delaware Water Tunnel; in the distance is the Hall of Records of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.



School No. 8, the successor to the first English Manor school and one of the city's important public schools.

A scene from the Kindergarten Circus—an attraction of the kindergarten class of School 8.



School No. 3, the successor to the English Manor school formerly located near old Philipsburgh.

Intersection of South Broadway and Radford Street. One of the two old English Manor schools was located near this point.

worse." However, discussions about the weather create gentle breezes that disperse the fogs of silence and cool the brow of gossip. From time immemorial the weather has been the unpredictable factor influencing the human race. It has exerted a major force in urging the race on to greater activity, and has served as a powerful agent in keeping it within reasonable bounds.

There are no official weather records for the Yonkers area prior to 1870, when an Act of Congress created the United States Weather Bureau. The early data covering this area consequently are sketchy, much being based on legends and hearsay. In general the climate is temperate. It varies widely from year to year and season to season, with warm summers, cold winters, and almost every variable in between. At times there are heavy spring rains with minor floods, and in summer electrical thunderstorms that are inspiring. At intervals there are winds which change the atmosphere sometimes with a howl and there are snowstorms when some Yonkersonians prefer the indoors. On occasion the streets become glassy with ice, causing delay and inconvenience, but the ice coating on the trees and shrubbery tends to transform the area into a glistening fairyland.

Some early recordings mention Hudson River floods back in the 1600's. In 1650 Long Island Sound was frozen over. In the 1700's many cold winters caused damage and suffering when snow covered the fences. Many animals perished owing to cold and starvation when the deep snows isolated them.

Bolton says: "During the winter of 1780 the Hudson froze over so hard that sleighs were driven from Yonkers Landing to New York City." Those were probably gala days when travel proved much easier over the ice than by the slower country road to New York. It was 68 years before the building of the railroad along the Hudson.

The Great Blizzard arrived on March 12, 1888, and was spoken of as the worst storm known to people living at that

time. There were hard winds and deep snowdrifts which stopped most travel, including the trains. Currently, there is much talk of milder winters in Yonkers, which appears on the records to be true. However, the Christmas storm of 1947 is still fresh in the memories of most Yonkersonians, when the snowfall was even heavier than in the Blizzard of '88 and again transportation came to a halt. However, there were not the high winds to create the deep snowdrifts nor the cold and suffering of the famous Blizzard. The winter of 1948–49 was mild and unseasonable, with the warmest February since 1890. Flowers bloomed nearly a month ahead of time. July, 1949, was the hottest month since 1871, with a mean average temperature of 78.6 degrees. The year 1950 might well be called the drought year, for the shortage of rain and water was the main topic of conversation and the subject of daily front-page items.

People are prone to remember only the days of bad weather, for such days tend to upset their program. They easily forget the many days of radiant sunshine, the days of glorious weather when they are occupied with many plans. History seems inclined to record the disturbing things while giving too little credit to the constructive and pleasant phases of the world.

It is impossible to go back and determine the good days and the bad days over the past 300 years, but it is safe to estimate that in the past 50 years the good days, the days of fine weather, in Yonkers will outnumber the poor ones by 10 to 1.

The average climate of Yonkers is healthy and invigorating, and days of excessive heat or cold are few and far between. Yonkersonians are beginning to realize that their home town is becoming a comfortable summer resort and that the winters are not bad at all. Unusual weather arouses interest because it causes a change in the routine of humans and their reactions to it will depend not only on their likes and dislikes but on their feelings from day to day.

For those wishing to know more about the climate of Yonkers, they should be told the story of a Yonkers enthusiast who thus conversed with a visitor:

*Enthusiast:* Yes, we have a fine climate all the year.
*Visitor:* You mean to say the climate is perfect?
*Enthusiast:* Yes, exactly so.
*Visitor:* But, you have cold weather and snow?
*Enthusiast:* Yes, but we like it for a change. We can skate, sleigh ride, and have lots of fun, and the summer feels better after the snow.
*Visitor:* But, you have hot weather in the summer?
*Enthusiast:* Well, not too hot. It feels good after the winter has gone, for we can still remember the snow. And, besides, we have rain, sunshine, flowers, and trees along with our beautiful hillsides and valleys. On the average, it is perfect. It might be bad on the 366th day every four years, but on that day we like to stay indoors and think about all the people in other sections of the country who are missing this wonderful climate.

# 15

# The Discoverer Comes to Town

WHILE delving into Yonkers' historical past and analyzing its present importance, one is impressed by the prospects of its glowing future. Its scenic beauty, molded by the hills and valleys within its wide-flung borders, its ideal situation between the majestic Hudson and the romantic Bronx River, its proximity to New York City, along with its Westchester County surroundings, combine to form a strategic location possessing a near-perfect setting for a community of homes and a business center. Much time, thought, and energy have been devoted in the past by capable progressive citizens to the expansion of Yonkers along desirable lines. It is well and proper to commend them for their excellent accomplishments and to urge them on to still greater deeds. It seems quite in order to place their names on a city Honor Roll for work well done.

Conscientious city officials have directed their efforts toward building a finer city. The Chamber of Commerce, the several civic clubs and associations, women's clubs, and other organizations have each and all performed their part to make Yonkers what it is today. The officials of these alert organizations have played no small role in the betterment of the community.

The *Yonkers Herald Statesman,* of broad influence and wide circulation, has devoted much space and effort to the development of a better city in which to dwell. The day has now arrived, however, when Yonkers needs new workers to reinforce those already carrying on the community work.

The city's problems are multiplying with the complexities due to new conditions arising from present trends of economic and social matters. It is becoming increasingly urgent for every Yonkers resident to give more thought to local conditions and more time and attention to the management of the city.

Every community has too many citizens acting as if they were merely sleeping in it, showing little if any day-by-day interest in local affairs. The rapidly developing problems challenge them, not only as responsible citizens but as good Americans. It is to be hoped such persons will become fully aroused to their obligations to children, neighbors, and friends, and will begin to take active parts in the affairs of their communities. Others cannot and must not be expected to do this for them. The community will be only as desirable a place in which to live or sleep as its citizens make it.

There is increasing evidence that a vital part of any future Yonkers program will center around a plan capitalizing on its proximity to New York City. At the same time a line must be drawn around Yonkers to prevent its being absorbed or overrun. In line with many other United States communities Yonkers faces a difficult problem in the current high cost of local government. It will require both serious thinking and scientific planning to develop a program to meet problems solvable neither by petty political thinking nor by bickering between groups; nor will the situation be met by ignoring it or facing it with complacency.

Why is the cost of government increasing so rapidly? Are these new costs fair and proper? Can efficient management make ends meet if given the chance? Is Yonkers being overrun by tax-free properties? Does its proximity to the great metropolitan city produce added expense? Is it in a favorable location that can be more fully capitalized? Is Yonkers becoming the "door mat" at the front entrance to the world metropolis? Will additional highways, parkways, and other

tax-free improvements absorb more of Yonkers' dwindling acres mainly to benefit people from other places?

The high cost of government and the resultant tax problem confront every American community, so Yonkers will have to face the situation head-on if it is to be solved. Taxes should not be a continual battleground, whether political or otherwise, for such differences are not good for either the morale or the general well-being of a community. At some point along the line taxes become excessive, and when that limit is reached it hurts any region even if blessed with many advantages. A well-organized community can remain in balance between income and outgo if it knows its limitations and is properly managed. It must do so, just as every family and business must have a balanced budget. It is the duty of the citizens, particularly the taxpayers, to see that the community is properly run. If it is mismanaged, they can secure new management. If it is in a rut, they can help pull it out. If it needs new programs and new ideas, the citizens should help furnish them. If there are too many services, they can be reduced. If there is too much political management, it can be eliminated. Most important of all is the taking of constructive action before it is too late.

It is well to digress briefly to explain that no attempt is being made here to delve into the intricacies of the Yonkers tax situation or to offer a plan to solve the problem. It is merely an effort to explore a few angles with the hope that it will encourage others to concentrate on the problem. First of all, it is a privilege to pay taxes. There are many places on earth where the individual has been deprived of his right to pay taxes together with other rights. It is an encouraging sign when people earn sufficient income on which to pay taxes and own taxable property. But taxes are supposed to be paid for services to be rendered; therefore everyone should be interested in how tax money is spent.

The tax history of Yonkers for the past three hundred

years would make an interesting study if compiled in readable form. In the beginning the Indians merely occupied the area now Yonkers and paid no taxes. Van der Donck was granted the land free of taxes in return for his help in settling the Indian problem. Philipse paid the King of England a mere pittance of £4 12s. a year, but was permitted to charge toll fees that many times exceeded his tax. The tax collected in 1785 from the farms in the area at the start of the new nation was inconsequential because very little government was needed and few services were rendered.

However, in 1950 the Yonkers tax levy amounted to $11,653,585.40 on $316,072,640.00 of taxable property. That is a sizable tax, but Yonkers now is a modern city with many advantages and improvements. Services are more expensive and people demand a greater number of them. The net result is that if the people want more they will have to pay more unless the problem can be solved either through more efficient operation or through undeveloped natural advantages. The latter suggestion holds possibilities and hope, having many approaches. It becomes part of the tax problem when approximately $70,000,000 of Yonkers real estate is untaxed. That is equal to 25 per cent of the $298,000,000 taxable real estate property [1950]. Another tax problem is involved when only 30 per cent of Yonkers land is improved with buildings, while 70 per cent has none. This problem not only concerns property owners, but indirectly affects those who pay rent.

Yonkers may occupy no different position in this respect from that of other communities; but it is evident the city has reached its tax-free saturation point. Therefore the construction of new homes and buildings is imperative.

Various old records give Yonkers an area of 17½ square miles. The Department of Commerce (1947) quotes 20 square miles. Another figure sometimes quoted is 21 square miles. The city government is currently quoting 20.3 square miles. Investigation reveals that no land has been added to

the city since it was originally organized; at that time the area was officially announced as 17½ square miles.

Several suggestions have been advanced regarding the differences in these figures, one being that some lowlands were filled in along the Hudson River, thus adding more land area; another hints that the railroad filled in some water area along the Hudson River for its roadbed. A checkup, however, shows the acreage to be small. The most illuminating suggestion has been that Yonkers moved its boundary to the center of the Hudson River after Westchester County had done likewise. This means that as the Hudson is about a mile wide at Yonkers, a strip of water about ½ mile wide by 4⅓ miles long, or a total of about 2.1 square miles, became part of the Yonkers area. If this is included in the city limits, it could account for 19.6 square miles.

Whether or not this water area is exactly correct, or whether there were discrepancies in old surveys, is not really important to this discussion. It seems advisable, however, for the city to have an official figure that everyone can use. The water area assuredly does not represent building lots, and very little of it can become taxable property or livable space. For this discussion the Hudson area has been omitted and a land area of 17½ square miles used. It is important, however, to know approximately how much of this land surface is non-taxable, and to know the amount taxable or subject to use for taxable purposes. The city appears to keep its records on a basis of property values rather than as acres of land in the taxable or non-taxable field. For this reason, exact acreage figures are not available at this time. Since this is not a technical study, but merely an effort to use some general figures to point up a situation, a few estimated figures have been used.

Within Yonkers boundaries are about 260 miles of public streets and about 12 miles of county parkway drives. Using an estimated average width of 40 feet, including sidewalk areas, it means about 2 square miles of non-taxable land. In

addition there are several miles of privately owned streets open to the public. These streets, of course, are vital to the city and the figure is quoted merely to show how the taxable area shrinks. The land area used by city and county for buildings, parks, and other purposes, and that used by other governmental agencies, plus the land utilized by schools, hospitals, and educational, religious, and charitable organizations—all tax free—probably amount to more than 4½ square miles. Perhaps the greater part, if not all, of this land is used for purposes necessary to the welfare of the city, but only a survey could determine the exact status.

It means, however, that perhaps 6 or 7 square miles of Yonkers land area is tax-exempt, leaving only about 11 square miles to carry the total tax load. That points to the fact that there already is a sizable amount of tax-exempt land in the city, that no more land area can be added, and also that it is important for future planning to determine how many more of its dwindling acres Yonkers can afford to place on the tax-free list. Communities have, in the past, been eager to attract new tax-free organizations and sometimes have donated land to secure them. But is it advantageous today when they must still be given city services now costing considerably more than formerly? The question should be carefully studied, with all facts made available, and a decision reached in the interests of Yonkers. It is well to bear in mind that Yonkers has no control, in this respect, over just what land becomes tax-exempt, except for such exemptions as it specifically makes. Any Yonkers land donated to tax-exempt organizations, or bought by them, automatically goes on the exempt list. With a strategic location, Yonkers could in the future be burdened with tax-exempt properties and find itself helpless to prevent that problem from developing. Some practical Yonkers plan or policy is urgently needed for future self-protection.

Apropos of this subject, the question arises whether or not it is necessary for Westchester County or New York State to

take over more of Yonkers' dwindling acres for the use of new superspeed highways which yield little actual benefit to Yonkers, being designed mainly for the convenience of traffic to and from other areas. Legally, it seems, Yonkers has no voice in the matter if the state decides to build a throughway for the accommodation of others, even though it acts as a detriment to the city and its future interests. Such a stand would seem untenable. Yonkers should have the final say and should be given a hearing. Yonkersonians would want to be reasonable because they appreciate that metropolitan New York should not be bottled up. Yonkers, however, already has supplied several outlets for this north-and-south traffic. It has yielded the beautiful valley of the Bronx River for a scenic route that should be preserved. It has yielded the historic Saw Mill River Valley for a superspeed highway. Central Park Avenue and the Albany Post Road furnish additional routes for those desiring to avoid heavy traffic on the parkways. Yonkers may already have done more than its share to open the northern bottleneck leading from Manhattan. Yonkersonians might well feel they should now be left in peace.

The question should be finally settled because the continual agitation for new routes, plus the uncertainty about their eventual location, is giving Yonkersonians the jitters. It is obstructing a natural growth of the city. It would be unreasonable to expect Yonkers to sacrifice all its beautiful valleys to new highways that injure its fine residential sections and cut the city into strips—yes, literally into ribbons—while creating many less desirable areas along the way.

Yonkers was strategic territory as long ago as the Indian days when Nappeckamack owned Manhattan Island, at that time its summer capital and hunting grounds. It continued to be strategic territory in the Dutch era, and later in the days of Frederick Philipse, who built a toll bridge and taxed Manhattanites who crossed it to see the wonders of Yonkers. To outsiders desiring to ride through this beautiful favored

region it would be no new or revolutionary experience to pay a toll. If more outside traffic must pass through Yonkers, it is obvious that a highway should follow the route selected and approved by it. It seems reasonable enough that only one new route should be used to avoid cutting several of them through the city. It should be wide enough to handle all future traffic and eliminate the necessity for further numerous plans or discussion. The selection of the route should not be based on the lowest cost, but on a basis of which route Yonkers will approve even though the one chosen should be more expensive to build. Furthermore, the state, when building such a highway, should be willing to spend sufficient money to solve the entire problem, and make it attractive to Yonkers if that is possible. All these considerations seem a fair approach to the problem.

Any Yonkersonian can study a map, and many can make suggestions as to routes. Various ideas can and will be discussed, among which could well be a new route for the Putnam Railroad.

A railroad right-of-way does not, as a rule, create an attractive residential district. The Putnam Division of the New York Central System has its problems regarding route and location. The people using it desire better service and are entitled to it. A new highway might be combined with the "Put" rail line and thereby solve several perplexing problems. It is easy to envision a great speedway reaching up from New York City through Van Cortlandt Park into Tibbetts Brook Park, taking the shortest route through Tibbetts Brook Valley to Palmer Road. At the latter point a mile-long tunnel could carry the rail-auto-truck highway deep under the hills, possibly deep enough so as not to disturb those living in the area; then past Tuckahoe Road, from which it could follow the railroad to the Saw Mill River. From that point the highway could use part of the parkway land, railroad route, and old Saw Mill River Road to make the great northbound artery. It would be an act of desecration to

spoil the Sprain River Valley, about the only real woodland route left in Yonkers, but that valley could carry a portion of the traffic north of the tunnel if necessary.

This envisioned broad highway could include a new double-track "Put" along one side, operating electric trains through to Grand Central. The railroad might gladly surrender its present tortuous route for the new line. New railroad stations could be built along with small business centers and carried on a rental basis.

This modern rail line would soon pay, for central Yonkers would develop rapidly with this incentive. The entire project could be set up as the Yonkers Underpass, with a Yonkers Underpass Authority to finance and build it out of tolls. The Underpass would use the depressed route through Tibbetts Valley, the tunnel under the hills, and the Saw Mill and Sprain Valleys, so that Yonkers streets, east-west, could cross over the Underpass, thus avoiding a barrier. The Underpass could be built wide enough to handle in parallel lanes any new highways to be built in the north-south direction through Yonkers.

Following this plan, the Underpass would contain the new Putnam Railroad, the Buffalo Thruway, the Major Deegan Highway, the Sprain Brook Parkway, and the Bronx River Cutoff. The Authority could build six or eight new bridges over the Underpass for the passage of Yonkers streets. Under these conditions, New York City and New York State would have their highways, the railroad would be improved, and Yonkers in general might be benefited if individual compensation were assured where needed and some further returns made to Yonkers for taxes, or in lieu of taxes, on the property involved.

Another fine highway along the Hudson River water front, now monopolized by the railroad, could be conceived. It might be expensive to fill in and construct such an artery, but expense cannot be the governing factor if outsiders want to use Yonkers' valuable routes. A highway of this character

should be built only with the approval of Yonkers and with acceptable inducements. The water front could be beautified and a Port of Yonkers created; an amusement center, park, boat harbor, and other features valuable to Yonkers might well be included without cost to the city. The route might eventually lead from New York up the Hudson River shore past Yonkers to a new bridge spanning the stream.

This is not the proper forum to debate the vital question of tolls. That polemical problem must be left to public opinion, for obviously it has two sides. There is, however, a question involved that can well be debated here. This question concerns the rights of local citizens along the way; of local property owners; of local communities as against the wishes of a larger majority of people who may like to use a new highway. Local communities should be properly compensated. That sometimes is difficult to effect by means of mere monetary payments, particularly if an entire community's atmosphere and character are destroyed by a new route or routes over which the community has no control. A projected highway should have the approval of the communities through which it is to pass. The fairest and only way to secure their approval is to follow a mutually satisfactory route that will benefit all concerned.

The time is ripe for Yonkers to take stock, survey its strategic position, determine its value in the light of new conditions, and project a Master Plan for its approximately 11,200 acres. Then it can determine intelligently whether or not to approve certain throughways or other construction instead of attempting to regulate by changeable zoning laws that leave property owners with the sense of a lack of security. A correctly drawn Master Plan could blueprint every acre in the city and include a program for "Centers of Attraction"—small lakes or parks, depending on the topography of each area—thus creating incentives for new home and construction development in Yonkers to produce additional taxable property where present vacant land exists. With such

a plan launched, Yonkers could well capitalize on its proximity to New York City as a reservoir for possible home-owners.

It is important that Yonkers retain its residential atmosphere, because it will remain a strategic location only as long as it does that. The metropolitan area apparently is facing an expansion program of tremendous proportions. Yonkers can get much of the new construction by preparing the way. But, people who build or buy new homes like to have some guaranteed security regarding the future status of a neighborhood before investing money. They would not like to be overrun with throughways or have their property values endangered by changeable zoning. They would feel encouraged to build adjacent to a "Center of Attraction." Possibly Yonkers can become a fully landscaped, beautifully laid-out city.

Doubtless many future plans will be both proposed and promoted to bring Yonkers to the attention of the world. But there is a plan that would create an outstanding attraction, and not only could it be developed promptly, but at a modest cost.

The majestic Hudson River, for instance, provides a natural setting for a Yonkers regatta that could be staged every summer. The river's one-mile width at Yonkers forms a lake-like water front, and its high palisaded shores form a natural bowl. On these protected waters could be staged a Grand Review followed by exhibitions including every type of water sport. The elevated shores of the river could provide vantage points from which millions of people might watch the aquatic events.

If properly organized, a mammoth extravaganza titled "The Discoverer Comes to Town" could become an internationally famed celebration. On the opening day the "Discoverers" actually could return to Yonkers. Old Sachem Nappeckamack, accompanied by his Queen, floating down the Hudson followed by thousands of gaily colored Indian canoes bearing warriors attired in full dress and war paint,

would make a sensational attraction. The red men could "discover" the beautiful site to be called by them Nappeckamack, make a landing on the water front, set up tents, and re-create the old Nappeckamack village, after which they would be welcomed by the million-odd visitors gathered for the occasion.

Henry Hudson and his Queen could sail up the Hudson in the *Half Moon,* trailed by hundreds or thousands of sailing craft gaily bedecked for the occasion, with the crews attired in period costumes. Sailboat owners in the entire metropolitan area might gladly join in the gala affair.

Henry Hudson could "discover" the Indians and the Indian village of Nappeckamack and be welcomed by the red men when he and his retinue landed on the Yonkers shore. Thousands of canoes and sailing vessels dotting the Hudson along the Yonkers four-mile water front, creating a riot of color, would, in the shadow of the Palisades, present a grandiose spectacle surpassing anything of the kind ever beheld hereabouts. It would be a matter of working out mere details to decide whether or not pyrotechnical or other modern aerial displays might add anything to the Grand Review, or whether the Indians should have full charge for one day and Henry Hudson the next day. The Navy and Air Force also might each have a day to stage colorful events.

At least one Grand Review could be held for all the "Discoverers" and their courts, followed by a glamorous parade passing through the main thoroughfares of Yonkers. Floats depicting scenes in the Indian, Dutch, English, and later eras of Yonkers history could be a feature of the procession.

The week of September 14 could annually be proclaimed "Discovery Week," unless a more appropriate date should be selected. "The Discoverer Comes to Town" pageant would attract thousands of visitors to Yonkers, from every state in the Union and even from foreign lands. It could be made the largest and most impressive affair ever presented anywhere.

Eventually a great Center should be constructed not only as headquarters for the pageant, but as a center for the future development of other ambitious Yonkers plans. The Center could well be known as "Ye Ole Younckers Village," or by the shorter designation of Younckersburgh. Yonkers might become the "Williamsburg of the North" were its historical past adequately explored and a plan organized for the future. How fine and progressive it would be if some philanthropic-minded person would rebuild a complete Indian village, in the proper setting and surroundings, as it was in 1600. Interesting and instructive would be a replica of old Colendonck, a village representing the early Dutch era; also a village representing the English Manor era with furnishings of the period. This broad plan of resurrecting the glories of the past could also include a village of the Colonial and Revolutionary eras. Aquehung and Nappeckamack might be built as twin villages portraying the two Indian tribes of the old Yonkers. Other villages could be named Philipsburgh and Colonial Younckers. Yonkers has both the history and the background for such a program.

Younckersburgh should be built around a beautiful lake, with ample space allotment for future development and automobile parking. It could include a museum, or several types of museums, with permanent exhibits. Quite in line with historied Yonkers could be a large building to house antiques, ancient types of automobiles, wagons, buggies, and other such things. It could be developed into a major show place, with an admission charge made not only to support it but to pay taxes on the value of the property as well. Public-spirited citizens might eventually donate new buildings and exhibits to expand the project if an over-all plan were approved. Yonkers already has made a modest beginning to that possible end with its Hudson River Museum, which could represent the nucleus of future programs.

In keeping with this suggested plan, Yonkers could de-

velop a great music center with a Younckers symphony orchestra and a music festival lasting several weeks.

Younckersburgh could house the National Shrine for Golf. As already suggested, Yonkers with its golf tradition should become the Historic Golf Center of the nation.

Younckersburgh should have a fine playhouse around which could develop a training center for the future greats of the stage and screen. It again could become the testing ground for new stage plays.

The Indians centuries ago staged their Busk or Harvest Festival in Aquehung and Nappeckamack; the Dutch and English held their annual feasts and celebrations when they in turn ruled the patroonship and the manor. All these events attracted wide attention and large crowds. It would be both appropriate and in keeping with past tradition for Yonkers to revive these old celebrations.

It is important that "Younckersburgh," which would house these numerous activities, should be located in an area easily accessible from New York City as well as Yonkers—an area, for example, like Tibbetts Brook Park, with water for a lake, a highway and convenient rail transportation, or by filling in the Hudson shore to use water and rail transportation. Metropolitan New York needs an outstanding pageant such as "The Discoverer Comes to Town," and Yonkers is the natural site for it. An enterprise of this character would bring additional "Discoverers" to Yonkers, and, of even greater importance, it could well be the genesis of a new era for the city. Instead of Yonkers being the door mat for the metropolitan area, the situation could be reversed with Yonkers placing a "welcome mat" at its doors, inviting visitors. The city then could begin to capitalize on its location adjacent to the metropolitan area, for such a program not only could encourage people to move to Yonkers, but could well be the means of creating new income for the city through admission charges made to the various events. Such a program might

be begun and completed with the city doing no more than developing a plan. Donations of money in due time might complete the project if properly organized. It should not, in any circumstances, be a tax-exempt program, but a profitable venture due to a strategic location.

It might be a novel move for Yonkers to plan a big Center and schedule events designed to make money either through admissions or a tax on admissions, rather than attempt to foot the bill itself. But Yonkers has a real opportunity to take advantage of its unusual location while, at the same time, rendering real service both to the Metropolitan area and the nation by creating within its borders a mammoth extravaganza and a great historic center.

"The Discoverer Comes to Town" may become as well publicized in the future as "What are Yonkers?" It might even develop into the greatest pageant on earth both in size and splendor. Younckersburgh could then become the "Center of Attraction" for the future Yonkers as is the old Manor Hall for historied Yonkers. It would be important to plan the entire program so that thousands of visitors could be handled without upsetting the equilibrium of either Yonkers or its citizens. The right location could be selected with that idea in mind and the programs arranged accordingly.

# 16

## Aquehung, a Community

THE success or greatness of the Yonkers of the future will depend very largely on the vitality and importance of the many communities which make up the city. Each and every community within its borders will have an important part, and it behooves the city as a whole to help create in each community the proper setting for the expansion and growth of the area along desirable lines. It is with this thought in mind that the door is opened to one of Yonkers' fine communities.

A normal individual is unable to dwell alone and like it. If isolated, he is of little benefit either to himself, his community, or his country. The family group forms the solid basis of the American mode of life. It is also the foundation of American community life, and the United States as a nation will be only as strong as its families collectively make it. The community is the backbone of this great country. Whether it is a village of a few hundred persons or a community within a larger town or city, it is the close association of neighbors and friends and their interest in each other that creates a better place in which to live. A man or a woman is worth just as much to the community as the individual effort he or she puts into it; and the community can be only as great as the collective efforts of its members make it. Some good or evil results from daily actions or inactions, and the records left behind reveal the net accomplishments. About once a year it is well to check the ledger and draw off a balance sheet to see if the figures are on the credit side.

The human life span is short enough at best; but one will survive longer and enjoy a fuller life on earth if he resides in a community he loves and wherein he can dwell in harmonious relations with his neighbors. Friendliness, cooperation, understanding, and consideration of others not only will help build a better community, but also will enrich the experiences of everyone.

> "Here lies the tragedy of our race;
> Not that men are poor;
> All men know something of poverty.
> Not that men are wicked,
> Who can claim to be good?
> Not that men are ignorant;
> Who can boast that he is wise?
> But that men are strangers!"
>
> AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Bearing in mind its historic background, one can better appreciate the Aquehung community of today, with paved roads, tree-lined streets, well-lighted thoroughfares, beautiful hills and valleys dotted with lovely homes, landscaped yards, lawns and flowering shrubs. Aquehung is essentially a community of homes, of friends, and its people want it to remain that way. Some would like to retain the village atmosphere and avoid expanding into a closely populated city. Intelligent planning should make possible the adaptation of many types of abodes to a community plan that would still retain the scenic views and village charm of the Aquehung area.

So long as there are birds warbling their songs of cheer, squirrels cavorting about the yards and clambering up and down the trees, and rabbits inhabiting the barberry thickets, while the occasional bark of a dog can be heard as it follows a trail until frustrated by brambles—so long as such rural conditions prevail, people will continue to enjoy a village atmosphere.

When viewing the modern apartment buildings located in

some sections of the Aquehung community, one is taken back by a little reminiscing to the Indian village and the first "apartment" houses built by the red men. These earlier abodes lacked present-day conveniences such as automatic elevators, hot water and showers, steam heat, gas, beds, furniture and furnishings, but they met the requirements of their era more than four hundred years ago.

Today, Aquehungians take pride in their winding residential streets, even though some of these lead them around in circles. They like the idea of following the old Indian trails around the hills and along the valleys. They enjoy their narrow lanes even if traffic is unable to pass without pulling aside into driveways. They appreciate unusual situations, when two roads like Dellwood Road and Pondfield Road West branch off at the West Center Church, follow the old trails around opposite sides of the hill and then cross each other on the far side. It is amusing when visitors question the reason for this situation, but amazing when Aquehungians are unable to give the answer. But Aquehungians like it that way.

Sometimes it is exasperating when guests arrive late for dinner, offering the excuse of having traveled around in circles; but Aquehungians have the usual answer ready—namely, that the place is very easy to find when one knows the way. Aquehungians travel by instinct and not by direction, for in certain instances the only way between two points is a figure eight or several twists and turns. But Aquehungians like it that way, and to date nothing has changed things.

> The shortest trail through Aquehung
> Is the trail which winds and roams
> Around its hills and through its vales,
> The trail which leads toward home.

And little or no worry is indulged in concerning the names of streets even though there are Cedar Street, Cedar Lane,

and Cedar Place. The Aquehungians know where they live and are sure that others can find their way. Sometimes they are surprised when a package happens to be left at the wrong house, even while admitting that there are places bearing the same numbers on streets with similar names. They merely deliver the package to the proper address and no more thought is given to it. An effort to change house numbers or street names can quickly bring on a friendly argument and the discussion can continue on and on. Many surprised visitors question why some streets bear even numbers on both sides, and others odd numbers, or a mixture of both; or why some have numbers like 40 on one side and 131 across the street. It is best to reply to such queries by changing the subject. Even if, at great length, explanation is made that "it just happened that way" many years ago when the first houses were built on private lanes, and map numbers were sometimes used instead of lot numbers, it will only start something difficult to finish. There is always the ready answer that "we like it that way" even though many doorbells are mistakenly rung.

No one is disturbed because Bronxville Road, which bisects Aquehung in a north-south direction, does not cross the river into Bronxville or lead in that direction. All will agree it is unusual but not distressing. Tuckahoe Road cuts across Aquehung east-west but does not enter Tuckahoe, ending at the Bronx River. The continuation of the road across the river in Tuckahoe is Yonkers Avenue. So there is a Tuckahoe Road in Yonkers, a Yonkers Avenue in Tuckahoe, a Yonkers Avenue in Yonkers, and a Tuckahoe Avenue in Tuckahoe. It is sometimes puzzling to visitors but does not upset the equilibrium of Aquehungians.

Palmer Road bisects Aquehung east-west and also ends at the Bronx River; when it crosses the bridge into Bronxville it becomes Palmer Avenue. Pondfield Road West parallels Palmer Road one block north, but when it crosses the river into Bronxville it is Pondfield Road.

Scarsdale Road is not in Scarsdale but in northeast Yonkers. It begins in the northern sector of Aquehung at the Bronx River near Tuckahoe station. It leads north through Yonkers to the Scarsdale line, where it joins the Bronx River Parkway. Visitors arriving by train or automobile should know in advance whether a Scarsdale Road address is near the Tuckahoe, Crestwood, or Scarsdale station, it being a matter of a difference of about three miles.

Of added interest to the area is the intriguing old trail, Midland Avenue, which begins in Tuckahoe, passes through Bronxville, crosses the Bronx River into Aquehung and Yonkers, then cuts due west near the Fleetwood station until it reaches the area of the Putnam Railroad, then turns south to a point near the New York City line. A visitor desiring to reach an address on Midland Avenue must know not only the house number, but the railroad to use and the station at which to detrain, since at least five different stations could be involved. If one is traveling by automobile, it is necessary to know which highway to take in order to arrive in the vicinity of the address sought, as several highways cross Midland Avenue at different places along its rambling path.

For better or for worse, Aquehungians prefer their community just as it is; they enjoy its privacy and its atmosphere. There are straight streets for those who would have them that way, and there are streets bearing attractive names easy to remember, while most of them are properly numbered and readily found.

Aquehungians like their trees and woodland scenes, whether on hills or in valleys. If a tree happens to be situated where a sidewalk should go, the tree has the right-of-way, for it is not difficult to walk around it. The people want the trees, as well as the birds and squirrels that are part of tree life. Tree shade may interfere with some varieties of flowers, but in that case the flowers are planted in sunny spots between trees or varieties are planted which will grow in the shade. In the fall season the people spend hours rak-

ing the leaves, which are carefully burned. This has been the custom since Indian days. In time, however, residents may learn to save the leaves, which contain valuable revitalizing elements for enriching the soil that in turn fertilizes trees and flowers as Nature intended.

Aquehungians are justly proud of their trees, including the great white oaks, oldest living things in the community. Some of them date back to the Indian era, and it is cause for regret that so few have survived through the ages. Long years ago Aquehung was a vast white-oak forest of majestic beauty. These great monarchs, some 100 feet in height with limb spreads of 150 feet, formed a huge overhead top that protected millions of birds in flight and gave shade to the wild animals which roamed through the forest.

Aquehungians like the hills and the valleys, the rocks, the bluffs, and the scenic terrain surrounding them. They like their terraces and gardens. They like the sense of stability resulting from the solid rock strata underlying their community. They have literally built their houses on granite and stone foundations, making them as near permanent as human hands can devise.

There are many interesting rocky bluffs in and around Aquehung and numerous boulders varying in size. Among them is one large lone rock which should be preserved in the community as a monument. This sizable Aquehung Boulder is conveniently located on Midland Avenue at a point near the clubhouse of the Lawrence Park Golf Course, just west of Wrexham Road. Its historic record and geological background are at present unknown, but those omissions do not impair its value as a monument. A geological study could be made, and eventually past legends may be discovered to unveil its secrets. This particular boulder stood close to the former old Midland Trail that may have been an important route in the moccasin era. It was in the midst of many skirmishes before and during the Revolutionary War, when fighting centered in the surrounding area.

Whether this landmark has occupied its present location since the beginning of time—perhaps deposited by an ancient upheaval—or whether it was brought here by glaciers from distant northern regions during the ancient Ice Age is immaterial. One might judge from its shape that it had rubbed against mountains and passed through valleys many centuries ago, or that its edges had been rounded by glaciers as they passed over it. Obviously, it is very much older than human occupation of this region.

It is hoped this giant rock, together with sufficient land surrounding it, may be dedicated to the Aquehung community—not only as a memorial to the hazy past, but as a future landmark. Individual plaques could be attached to its sides to commemorate the important dates in the history of this region. Encircling this Aquehung Boulder could be spaced at intervals on landscaped grounds smaller boulders carefully selected to denote the different types of rock formation, both those peculiar to the Aquehung area and specimens of various types of foreign rocks deposited hereabouts by the glaciers. The smaller stones could be suitably inscribed to explain their origin and made part of the memorial. The community thus would have not only a fitting Aquehung monument, but an interesting collection of stones for a geological exhibit. The Weckquaeskeck Indians would have called such a collection Wa-wa-na-quas-sick, meaning a group of memorial stones. The monument should be known, perhaps, as the Aquehung Boulder and the plot as Wawanaquassick Park.

Numerous outstanding dates could thus be commemorated: 1639—The Indians sold Aquehung to the Dutch; 1646—Aquehung was officially transferred from the red man's to the white man's world; 1652—Colendonck, including Aquehung, became a patroonship; 1667—Aquehung became a part of Doughty's Plantation; 1672—Aquehung became a part of Yonkers Plantation; 1710—probable end of Indian era; 1783—Aquehung and Yonkers freed from England together with

the sovereign State of New York. Whether additional dates should be registered on the monument could well be left to the wishes of the Aquehung community.

Aquehung, invested with rare scenic charm, straddles eight beautiful woodland hills of varying dimensions and heights encompassed by fertile green valleys. When the majestic oaks and other deciduous trees are in full leaf, they cover the hills and the houses on them like great tents raised to close off the section as an exclusive domain for the spring and summer months. Aquehungians actually live and move under this vast leafy bower during their daily meanderings over the community in the warm season.

Come autumn, however, a complete transformation occurs, just as if the tent were removed or the scenery shifted while the leaves bow themselves out and hunt for cover. The hilltops come into view as if by magic, revealing the grouping of beautiful homes and graceful topography. Aquehungians again have opportunity to become acquainted with their hillside landscapes and the valleys surrounding them, all dotted with evergreens that assume importance for winter settings.

Each original farm or hill can boast a center of attraction. The old Hunt farm and its highlands claim the famous Sarah Lawrence College. On the Lawrence farm is located the Lawrence Park Golf Course and the great Aquehung Boulder. The Hart farm contains the historic Hart House, West Center Church, Andrus Park, and School Number Eight and its popular Kindergarten Circus. The old Odell farm holds the original Odell House, the active apartment-house area and business center. The old Bowne, Smith, and Underhill farms form a background for picturesque historic St. John's and Asbury Churches—highlights of that section—while the Old Mill is the center of attraction on the ancient Valentine farm.

School Number Eight is located only a stone's throw from the site of the ancient Indian shows staged in the old Aquehung Bowl. The scenery has changed with time, houses now

dotting the hillsides and parts of the slopes, but a lake is still there with a beautiful park surrounding it.

The Indian canoes and village are no more, but a quiet, lovely scene can be found around the lake where hundreds of wild ducks float along and feed at leisure. The birds settled in this spot a few years ago and, seemingly under its influence, have become tame. The ducks are really "Discoverers Come to Town," for they "discovered" the lake from the air, settled on its placid surface for a rest, apparently were charmed with the community and its friendly people who fed them, and decided to make it their home. The flock is increasing rapidly through new arrivals and the ducklings are growing up. The human community is increasing likewise as people visit and move here to join the "charmed circle."

Aquehung has within its boundaries a church sometimes endearingly referred to as a Community Church. It is not so old as either the famous Asbury Church or historic St. John's Church, but it exercises considerable influence in the community. The following is quoted from the church records:

> "The West Center Church had its beginning in 1912 when some residents of the Armour Villa Park section decided to found a Sunday school in the area for their children, since the distance to other churches made them inconvenient at the time when automobiles were a rarity. They obtained the use of a small portable building from the First Presbyterian Church of Yonkers, erected it on a plot at the corner of Cross Street and Wilbur Place, and began Sunday school classes.
>
> "In time, regular religious services were held and later the 'West Center' branch of the Dutch Reformed Church of Bronxville took over a larger building at Bronxville Road and Boyd Place near by. By arrangement with the parent church, the pastor conducted services one Sunday each month, while the associate pastor held services the other three Sundays.
>
> "By 1927 the population of the entire area had increased considerably, particularly of Armour Villa Park and Cedar Knolls sections, and it became desirable to expand the church activities. In the reorganization that followed was established the

West Center Church, Congregational, as an independent church.

"A site had previously been acquired in 1922 of a new church on Pondfield Road West at Chatfield or Dellwood Road and in 1928 a building program was begun. The first unit, the Community House, was built, and on April 21, 1929, the members of the Sunday school and the church marched from the old building to dedicate the new one. With community service one of the major aims of the church, West Center has during the last fifteen years become a focus for a great many civic and educational activities.

"Community House not only serves as a home for the Armour Villa branch of the Yonkers Public Library, open to the public five days and two evenings each week, but plays host to the following groups which regularly hold their meetings there: the Women's Organization, Service Guild, Parents' Group, Better-Half Club, and the High Roaders.

"Other activities which use West Center Church facilities include an afternoon Play School, several dancing and dramatic clubs sponsored by the Parents' Group, Cub Scout and Brownie Troop meetings, the Cedar Knolls and Armour Villa Park Associations, the Republican Club, and the Bronxville branches of the King's Daughters and the Westchester Home Bureau."

The histories of Aquehung's three churches have been quoted at some length, for these organizations are doing splendid work and the community is proud of them. They not only serve the area in a religious way but are centers of activities for many local affairs. Their facilities are offered freely, and their activities exert a notable influence for good and in the building up of a better community. Of general interest is the fact that a fine edifice for the newly organized Saint Eugene's Church is to be built on the northeast corner of Tuckahoe Road and Central Park Avenue, a beautifully wooded plot. It will be welcomed in Aquehung, to take its place with the other local churches.

There is also in Aquehung an outstanding college of wide reputation. Sarah Lawrence College is creating an educational atmosphere while doing its part to build a finer community. The nation eventually will hear more of this ex-

cellent school, which already has made a place for itself among the better institutions of higher learning. Its history is noteworthy. The following is quoted from the college records:

"Sarah Lawrence College was founded by a man who had a talent for pioneering. William Van Duzer Lawrence's wide and keen observation convinced him that a new approach to education would be valuable.

"Twenty years ago this conviction took form in the establishing of Sarah Lawrence College for Women. Mr. Lawrence, then in his 80's, arranged to turn over his beautiful estate with its stately Tudor mansion as the setting for the College.

"Unbound by precedent and imitation throughout his business life, Mr. Lawrence was equally ready to try new methods in educational fields. He carefully laid his plans, which went forward without halt. Westlands, his beautiful home, modeled after an old English engraving which he once found among his mother's papers, became the administration building of the College. The gardener's cottage on his twelve-and-one-half-acre estate was remodeled to serve as an infirmary, and the stone stable where the Lawrence Cadillacs and Emeline III, the Jersey cow, were once housed, became the music studios.

"The dormitories were designed in Tudor style to conform with the Westlands architecture. Mr. Lawrence's bequest to the College, with a total valuation of $1,500,000, included enough money to build and equip three dormitories, which included classrooms and a small dramatics workshop.

"Sarah Lawrence College first opened its doors in October, 1928, with 150 students. With the registration of another class in 1929, dormitory space was exhausted and some students and faculty members lived together in an apartment house, pending the completion of McCracken Hall. There were many other inconveniences in those first years, but students and faculty felt they were partners in an exciting adventure and they met the difficulties with zest. That initial atmosphere of cooperative adventure in the field of education by faculty and students has continued to pervade the College. Since 1931 the resident students have all been housed on the campus.

"There were in the 1948–49 school year 347 students, including 65 day students, of whom 38 were non-resident veterans.

There were 62 on the teaching faculty, 32 full-time and 30 part-time."

The college has an outstanding library, containing 52,000 volumes available for reference not only to students but to the community.

The Aquehung community at present has three active civic associations—in Armour Villa Park, Cedar Knolls, and Lawrence Park West. They are doing splendid creative work locally and helping not only the areas they specifically cover, but the community as an entity. It would be a fine plan for each section to have an active organization so that several could join together when needed for group action in the interests of the region as a whole. The Cedar Knolls association has been actively and continuously in operation for thirty-one years. Such organizations encourage their members and neighbors to know each other better and help build community spirit and a finer area.

On the western border along Central Park Avenue is the new Andrus Park, which not only will be useful for recreation purposes but will give some degree of isolation. Sprain River and Tuckahoe Rivulet merge in this park and could supply needed water for a scenic park lake. Such a lake would be a good place for boating, fishing, and skating. It would benefit the whole community. Eventually this park should be known as Aquehung Park and become a center of attraction on the west.

To the south, Lawrence Lake should take the place of a portion of the Lawrence Park Golf Course, which could be shifted to permit it; this would add more water surface to the community. Aquatic sports are ever popular and water is a source of attraction.

Not far from these points of interest is an unusual building on Palmer Road. It is a large brick structure of stately appearance, housing the records of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Copies of important documents are kept here in vaults far removed from crowded New York.

Within a short distance of this building is the new modern structure containing the downshaft to the New York City water tunnel. This unusual subterranean river, known as the Delaware Aqueduct, is a marvel of engineering accomplishment. It varies from 300 to 600 feet below the surface of the Aquehung community, as it passes under the hills and valleys. The tunnel was bored through solid rock over most of its length. It has an excavated diameter of 23 feet 8 inches, and is lined with concrete to a finished diameter of 19 feet 6 inches. The New York Board of Water Supply estimates that this concrete lining will last indefinitely. There is no foreseeable limit to its life, as there is no danger of damage from water friction.

The portion passing under the Aquehung community is known as the Kensico-Hill View Tunnel and is slightly more than 72,000 feet long, or equivalent to the underground distance from Kensico Reservoir north of White Plains to the Hill View Reservoir in lower Yonkers near the New York City line. This length of tunnel was constructed at a cost of about $33,000,000, excluding the cost of land, engineering, and administration. It was placed in operation April 28, 1942. This underground river has a nominal capacity of 1,800,000,000 gallons per day, an enormous amount of water flowing by gravity from the collecting Kensico Reservoir to the distributing Hill View Reservoir.

Many local citizens remember when the tunnel was under construction and the consequent blasting that continued many months, accompanied by earthquake-like temblors which caused some damage to houses. The tunnel was rushed to completion while World War II was on. It was believed the tunnel's great depth would protect the New York City supply against bombs or other war damage. This was of vital importance, since other water lines to New York City lie near the surface and are subject to possible attack.

To understand fully the importance of this mammoth aqueduct, it is necessary to explain more at length the entire

New York City water-supply system. Stretched underground along the west side of the Bronx River is the Bronx Pipe Line, built in 1884 to carry water from the original dam at Kensico to a reservoir at William's Bridge in New York City. It was constructed of cast-iron pipe 48 inches in diameter. Not many people hereabouts are aware that the old pipe line extends along the Aquehung side of the Bronx River, forming the embankment conspicuous south of Palmer Road. The embankment serves as a walkway from Palmer Road to Pondfield Road West. This pipe line continues in operation, having been connected with the new Kensico Reservoir when the latter's new dam was constructed in 1916. It is approximately 15 miles long and has a daily capacity of about 20,000,000 gallons. In an emergency Aquehung could draw water from this source, but does not ordinarily do so.

It is a coincidence, since not so planned, that this pipe line carries about the same amount of water daily as the mean flow of the Bronx River. According to the County Parkway records the flow of this river past Pondfield Road West and Palmer Road in Aquehung is estimated as follows:

| | | | *Gallons per day* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean Flow ..... | 37.6 cu. ft. per sec. | (4-year period) | 24,300,000 |
| Dry Weather Flow ... | 12. " " " " | ..... | 7,750,000 |
| Maximum Flow Recorded ..... | 876 " " " " | (Sept. 1944) .. | 566,000,000 |
| Minimum Flow ..... | 1.2 " " " " | ..... | 775,000 |

The Bronx River has a present effective drainage area of only 26.6 square miles because the water collects in the river from the area below the Kensico Dam. The latter is 307 feet high and 1843 feet long. A few years ago it was one of the largest dams in the United States, but today there are twenty-four others higher, and twenty-five longer dams. Hoover Dam, the highest, rises 726 feet, while Fort Peck Dam is the longest, 21,026 feet. By comparison the new Croton Dam, not far from Kensico and forming part of the

Stone quarry on Midland Avenue near Central Park Avenue, showing that Yonkers is still undergoing some leveling processes.

One of Yonkers' fine historic markers, located on old Mile Square Road.

The famous Cat Rocks (in the background), as seen from Tuckahoe Road near its junction with Mile Square Road.

Saw Mill River Parkway from the McLean Avenue bridge, looking north toward the tollgates.

New York City water-supply system, is 294 feet high and 2200 feet long.

It is well worth both time and effort to visit the Kensico Dam in its beautiful setting and behold the enormous masonry structure stretching across the valley of the Bronx River. It impounds not only the Bronx water but also that of the Byram River. The dam extends from the high ridge on the west to the loftier ridge on the east, forming a large lake and storage reservoir with a normal capacity of about 29,000,000,000 gallons. The Bronx River appears tiny by comparison with the whole project, the stream at that point being insufficient in volume to supply enough water to replace the evaporation from the huge lake. The Kensico Reservoir is the receiving and storage lake for the water collected in the Catskill Mountains, where the Schoharie Reservoir stores about 20,000,000,000 gallons and the Ashokan Reservoir about 130,000,000,000 gallons. The water reaches Kensico through the Catskill Aqueduct, which passes under the Hudson River. This aqueduct has a capacity of 640,000,000 gallons per day. Kensico also receives from local sources about 50,000,000 gallons daily.

The new Delaware Aqueduct is a deep rock tunnel over 100 miles long, bored from the upper reaches of the Delaware River. It passes under the Hudson River and continues to the Kensico Reservoir. When completed and the water is available the Delaware-Kensico portion will have a nominal daily capacity of 1,000,000,000 gallons. Only 470,000,000 gallons per diem can be drawn from the Delaware River by agreement among the states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; so more will have to come from that river later, or from other sources tapped farther away, to operate this aqueduct to capacity when additional water is needed.

The water level of the Kensico Reservoir during a drought, or when the water is being run off more freely, drops 25 to 30 feet, disclosing at times the remains of buildings, stone

walls, and roadways of the old villages abandoned in the valley before the water was turned in to cover the area.

Another unit of the New York City water-supply system is the Croton Reservoir, which, too, supplies water to the world metropolis. Croton is an integral part of the vast project. Its storage capacity is 103,000,000,000 gallons in the 18 reservoirs, lakes, and ponds of the Croton watershed. From it the old Croton Aqueduct in the Hudson River Valley can carry to New York City 45,000,000 gallons daily, while the new Croton Aqueduct in the Saw Mill River Valley has a daily capacity of 285,000,000 gallons. But the Croton Reservoir also can furnish a generous amount of water to Kensico Reservoir through the new Delaware Aqueduct, which passes below the Croton water supply, being equipped with a connection for that purpose.

Thus it may be observed that the Kensico Reservoir can at present receive a total of about 1,200,000,000 gallons per day, and later, after the Delaware project is completed, it can take about 1,700,000,000 gallons daily. The Kensico Reservoir can then deliver 850,000,000 gallons per day through the Catskill Aqueduct and 1,800,000,000 gallons through the Delaware Aqueduct to Hill View Reservoir; and in addition, 20,000,000 gallons through the Bronx Pipe Line to William's Bridge Reservoir. With the present New York City daily water consumption in the neighborhood of 1,100,000,000 gallons, it is evident that Kensico, per se, could supply the metropolis if required. The new Delaware Aqueduct, which passes under the Aquehung community, can when necessary carry, deep underground, enough water to supply New York City, thus avoiding the hazards of accidents and war.

The Bronx Pipe Line, Catskill Aqueduct, Old Croton, and New Croton Aqueduct lie near the surface and would be vulnerable to attack under certain conditions. It is comforting to note, however, that if both Kensico and Croton Dams were destroyed, together with the Hill View Reservoir,

the water still could be routed to New York City through the aqueducts leading from the Catskill Mountain reservoirs, thus minimizing possible accidents and war risks.

The total capacity of the combined reservoirs for water storage in the New York City system, which also supplies many communities in Westchester County, is 253,000,000,000 gallons. There are drought periods when the supply falls below the margin of safety, causing anxious moments; but a long-range plan calls for increased storage in the Catskills to provide the continuous needed supply.

Some of the current maps of the Aquehung area show the Sprain River as the Bryn Mawr Blow-off, and in real estate circles it is often so named. Investigation shows that at a point just west of Central Park Avenue, where the Catskill Aqueduct crosses the Sprain River, there is an opening or "blow-off" in the aqueduct, which can be used to drain it when necessary. Should repairs be needed, the water would be shut off at the Kensico Dam and the aqueduct drained to permit workmen to enter it. It is not difficult to work inside this aqueduct, as it is about 17½ feet wide by 17 feet high and shaped somewhat like a horseshoe. Any water drained off would pass into the Sprain River, thence to the Bronx River, and out to sea. As the New York City water-supply system has the right to do this, the maps have been so marked. It is called "Bryn Mawr Blow-off" because the aqueduct blow-off actually is in the Bryn Mawr section.

Seldom is such drainage needed, but during April of 1949 the new Delaware Aqueduct was drained to permit the completion of some of the shafts near the Kensico Reservoir. This was a large undertaking. When the water is cut off at Kensico, the Delaware Aqueduct between Kensico and Hill View actually holds about 150,000,000 gallons, which must be pumped out before workmen can enter the tunnel. This would be sufficient water to flood the small Sprain River if pumped out too fast.

The New York City water-supply system is both interest-

ing and important to the Aquehung community, because it not only runs under it and along its borders, but occasionally supplies it with water. But it must not be forgotten that Yonkers has its own excellent water system which would do credit to any city. It cost about $12,000,000. Yonkers normally draws about 10,000,000 gallons per day of fine water from the Saw Mill River. This is passed through filter beds covering about 20 acres, where the water is purified by a sand process. The city also draws about 10,000,000 gallons daily from the city reservoir known as Grassy Sprain Lake. In the event of a shortage, Yonkers can supply its needs from the New York City water supply, previously mentioned, which affords excellent protection in an emergency. Yonkers normally would draw the water from the Catskill Aqueduct already connected, but in some circumstances could obtain water from the other aqueducts.

The time may come when Yonkers will abandon its own water supply and use that of New York exclusively. The Saw Mill and Grassy Sprain Rivers may become more adaptable for lakes and attraction centers under a city-wide plan. The Grassy Sprain Reservoir is a beautiful lake, readily lending itself to recreation and sizable open-air events.

Not only does the underground Delaware Aqueduct "river" flow quietly under the Aquehung community, but the Bronx Pipe Line passes along its border on one side and the Catskill Aqueduct near its western line. The possible water capacity of these three underground man-made rivers totals nearly 3,000,000,000 gallons daily or 150 times more than the average daily flow of the Bronx River; so, if their combined volume were released into that river its valley could not hold it. Not many communities have an unusual situation like that of Aquehung, with streams forming its boundaries and two man-made underground rivers with parallel courses beneath its surface. The city of Yonkers has a similar situation, with surface streams on its east and west borders—the Bronx and Hudson Rivers—while paralleling

them through its north-south valleys are the Saw Mill, Sprain, and Grassy Sprain Rivers, Tibbetts Brook, and Tuckahoe Rivulet, making six flowing surface streams running in a north-south direction; while there are a total of five man-made subterranean rivers within an area of about four miles.

It would not be too surprising if, in the future, it were proved that this rapid flow of underground water sets up certain "drafts" or "drags" which draw away the tension and friction from the community, thus producing the placid, wholesome atmosphere so noticeable in Aquehung. And while on the subject of this great water system, here is an opportunity to explode the occasional rumor that baby fish sometimes get into the aqueducts and thence into the bathtub. In this era of the cocktail no one has yet admitted to seeing one in a glass of water. According to the water authorities, fish are kept in the Kensico, Croton, and Grassy Sprain Reservoirs to help prevent contamination. The baby fish are carefully screened from the outlet pipes and seldom, if ever, get into the water lines. If one did, no harm would result, because it would be a clean little thing born and reared in pure fresh water.

The Kensico Dam cuts off the upper Bronx River, impounding its water to be delivered to New York City through the aqueduct. This naturally reduces the flow of the river. This big aqueduct adds nothing to the beauty of the landscape, for it lies far below the surface of the community.

The Bronx River water seems to ripple along as if glad to be free while en route to the great ocean instead of being confined within the walls of the subterranean river. This stream may well feel it is serving humanity best when it creates along its course the scenic charm which people enjoy.

The Bronx River and its parkway combine to form a priceless wooded area along Aquehung's eastern border. During the Revolutionary War era the lake formed by this river, at Aquehung, stored water for power to run the old mill located there. In early times the lake was the "old swimmin' ole"

for the youngsters, who swam there in peace, their privacy amply protected by trees and shrubbery. In later years, after being landscaped, the former "ole" became Bronxville Lake —perhaps a more refined swimming spot for those owning "swim suits."

With the construction of the parkway the lake was enlarged and landscaped, as already stated, the old swimming hole giving way to a scenic lake now a duck sanctuary. The modern youngster thus has lost one of his age-old rights, having been obliged to turn to the more prosaic and less appealing concrete pools. By designating this lake as Aquehung Swimming Hole it could well be returned to the young folks to whom it should always belong.

The old ford over the river near this point later was called Underhill's Ford or Underhill's Crossing, while the roadway became Swain Street until changed to Pondfield Road West.

The first to use the water power mentioned above was a gristmill built at an early date, known as Underhill's Mill. By 1848 it had become Swain's Cutlery Factory, later called Duden's Silk Factory. The Ward Leonard Company, electrical-appliance manufacturers, bought the site in 1897, remaining there until 1916. It was then taken over by the Westchester County Parkway Commission. Next to this building, near the present Alger Court Westborne, there was erected in the 1800's a tavern called Bridge Hotel, used mainly by the workers in Swain's Cutlery. The old Swain home now is Stoneleigh in the Alger Court group.

The area along both sides of the Bronx River, even in the long-ago days, was united by a bond of community interests. When the Harlem Railroad was built in 1844, the Underhill's Crossing and Tuckahoe stations served the people of the whole community. The Fleetwood station was added later. The new railroad made a great impression in the region, where only a few scattered farms existed at the time. Where formerly a trip by stagecoach from New York had taken

several tiresome hours, the time by train was reduced to one hour and a half.

The New York and Harlem Railroad began operating in 1831, only one year after the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had inaugurated the first railroad line in the United States. It was originally planned to run the New York and Harlem line only the length of Manhattan Island, from City Hall to the Harlem River. For six years it operated with horses, but was converted to steam power in 1837, when it undertook an expansion program that carried it beyond the Harlem River north to Underhill's Crossing, Tuckahoe, and then to White Plains by 1844, and finally up to Chatham by 1852. The timetable in 1848 scheduled a 7:40 A.M. and a 3:06 P.M. train to New York; returning, a passenger could arrive either at 9 A.M. or 5:30 P.M. In 1854, to encourage travel, the railroad issued commutation tickets to New York from Underhill's Crossing for $45.00 per year. There were seven daily passenger trains, except Sunday, and one freight train in each direction in 1866. On that schedule Bronxville, instead of Underhill's Crossing, was listed for the first time. The trip to New York then took sixty-two minutes.

Timetable comparisons between 1848 and 1950, a period of one hundred and two years, show the progress made. Now there is a double-track electric railroad providing excellent daily and annual service. It is proper to give credit here where credit is due. It is factual that the Harlem Division of the New York Central System has meant much to the community it has served so well. There is neither an easier nor a safer way to ride to and from New York City, and seldom are there delays or uncomfortable experiences encountered. The fare is not excessive under prevailing conditions, and there is a choice of many trains. One can at present ride as often as desired, during any month, to Grand Central Terminal and return for $15.36; and there are convenient express schedules for trains, varying in running time from twenty-

six to thirty minutes. While the service naturally is not so cheap as a century ago, it is twice as fast, with seventy daily weekday trains instead of four. Not many are aware that the Harlem Division Railroad actually was built across a portion of Yonkers territory. But, as previously mentioned, the Yonkers boundary extends to the middle of the Bronx River and follows its winding course. The railroad crosses the river twice between Bronxville and Fleetwood stations.

A few years ago the Aquehung-Bronxville community became famous overnight when the Bronxville authorities issued a regulation directed against automobile parking at the railroad station. The order was issued with the explanation that husbands waiting for trains to New York were blocking traffic near the station by parking cars while conversing with wives until train time. Offenders were cautioned to say their prolonged farewells at home and alight quickly at the station or else receive a summons from the police, who had orders to keep husbands and fair spouses moving along near the depot area. Newspapers and "movies" took up the cudgels in behalf of the lip-caressing, forlorn couples, which resulted in the Bronxville railroad station quickly being transformed into a hot "spot news" point when the reporters and camera men arrived from New York City and elsewhere to "cover" the scenes of affectionate embraces and remarkable doings alleged to have been delaying traffic and disrupting the public service. Stories galore were written and many pictures shown of the amiable Aquehung-Bronxville community.

Today the area still is famous; wives drive their husbands to the train in the morning and meet them at night, and traffic becomes tangled at times. But the domestic love urge and community spirit finally overcame the distasteful police regulations and fond adieus continue unabated. This whole incident seems properly to reflect the community as it is and also sheds light on the home-loving type of people who reside in it.

In the early Indian days, when Aquehung was in power, the sun rose to the east of the Tuckaho Hills and set on the west; and to them Aquehung was the center of the world. Today, by air line, the Aquehung Hills are 10,500 miles from Melbourne, 8420 from Manila, 7875 from Bombay, 7850 from Cape Town, 5300 from Buenos Aires, 4660 from Moscow, and 3500 from London. There is an air-line crossroad above the community, along which flights are made in many directions. Eventually one may be able to fly in a plane with the speed of the earth and have continuous sunshine en route. The outer surface of the earth is rotating at the rate of about 16 miles per minute. Some planes have already flown 10 miles per minute, and reports credit even higher speeds.

Some people hereabouts feel that the sun and the moon come a wee bit closer to the earth as they pass over Aquehung; that the sun shines just a little brighter atop the Tuckaho Hills and that the moonbeams play a little longer in Aquehung's lovely valleys. In this connection Aquehung is interested in the new 200-inch telescope at Palomar Mountain, California, where scientists report having gazed 1,000,000,000 light-years into space, or a distance of 6,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles. The astronomers are seeing far beyond the sun (distant only 92,900,000 miles from the earth) into a vast new space-universe. They already have discovered many new wonders; but it is doubtful if they will find another Aquehung even in the empyrean vastness of the cosmic universe.

Yes, indeed, it is very doubtful whether any Aquehungian would even concede the possibility. As a matter of fact, it is dubious whether any one of the several communities of Yonkers would admit it or whether any Yonkersonian would even take the time off to peer through the Palomar window of the universe in what must prove to be a useless effort to find a more alluring place in which to live.

But time marches on and the Palomar window of the world may some day disclose startling things about the universe,

things about which we know nothing at all today. And time marches on in Yonkers too and changes will come, but whether they will be for the better will depend on what happens from day to day.

If one looks through the window of City Hall at each of the forty communities of Yonkers, one will see a blending of the reflected glories of the city. If these communities gaze through their forty windows at City Hall, it is important that they see there the focal point of their aspirations. It is important that they have a feeling of pride not only in their own communities but in the city as a whole with its glorious traditions. It is important that those established in City Hall peer through its windows with interest and pride in the growing communities surrounding it.

Today as one gazes through these community windows there is found an occasional cloud idling its way across the scene. Whether these passing clouds are merely casting intriguing shadows on the horizon or are giving ample warnings of storms to follow will depend on the actions of many people.

Some communities are already casting a weather eye at these floating shadows which at times blur their sunshine and despoil their landscape. They would like to discuss the weather with sympathetic neighbors.

Some of these communities are beginning to wonder whether their community ambitions, community wishes, and community needs are being given less and less consideration by the city as a whole.

Rumbling in the distance may mean only a passing shower which will bring out more flowers, or it may mean another throughway or zone-change construction which will disturb them.

At times, they feel the wind blowing from the wrong direction, with currents and crosscurrents over which they seem to have no control. They find it difficult at times to improve their community status owing to inaction by the

city as a whole. They have some feeling that City Hall is a long way off and not easily reached and that it lacks understanding when they arrive there. Sometimes there is a feeling of futility when their plans and efforts to build a finer community seem frustrated. They pay their taxes and wonder why their streets and their schools lack the things they desire. But even more important, they are somewhat puzzled over the future of the area.

Will the city continue as a fine residential area, or will it become an overgrown and overrun suburb of metropolitan New York? Time marches on and the future of the city is being determined day by day. It is a slow process which sometimes encourages inertia, but it is time to survey the scene through these interesting windows. The answer is in the hands of its citizens. Does Yonkers want to continue as a great residential community, a city built on forty attractive community pillars, or will it permit the clouds to shadow its beautiful hills and valleys until it becomes a foot mat of the rapidly expanding metropolitan area?

# 17

# Ye Olde Aquehung School

IN THE dim long ago when Sepham, a sachem of the Weckquaeskeck nation, ruled over a wide domain and his flourishing capital was the village of Aquehung, located on the heights of the Tuckaho Hills, this great chief was a powerful sovereign, wise in the councils of his race, progressive in his ideas, and one who entertained many plans for the future. In his domain were a number of smaller villages occupied by rapidly expanding tribes governed by lesser chiefs.

Sachem Sepham and his Weckquaeskecks had descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors, to whom they paid reverence. They were proud of their race and traditions. Their civilization had advanced a long way toward a better world. They dwelt in permanent abodes called "Long Houses," where several families lived together. They felt sure that they were residing in a paradise world. Their beautiful country included the great forests, hills, and valleys of what is now the northeastern district of Yonkers. In this Indian domain the rivers and smaller streams wandered through these forests and down the valleys, creating travel routes for the canoes and fine fishing grounds. These streams also furnished the setting for the myriad wild flowers, blooming shrubs, and small trees then flourishing abundantly. In so wondrous a setting the Weckquaeskecks established the first school in Aquehung. They were proud of it, although it lacked a regular schoolhouse and such conveniences as desks, blackboards, and books. For a schoolhouse the Indians used one of their Long Houses, wherein

the children of all ages assembled. Each child owned a fine beaver skin which was placed on the floor, and on these luxurious rugs they sat for hours in their eagerness to acquire knowledge.

Indian legends mention the training of the children, who in groups were told of the traditions of their past, of their glorious civilization, and of the world beyond their borders. It would be difficult to envision a more alluring scene than this particular one created by a hundred or more Indian children, each ensconced on a large beaver rug, eyes fixed on their teacher, listening intently to geography or history lessons of their world. They had neither history books nor writings to study; so their legends and daily experiences were passed from person to person by the spoken word, the only method then known to the Indians for imparting knowledge of their past and for offering suggestions for their future.

In this same school the children were also taught many generally useful things to prepare them for the future. The girls were taught the art of cooking and the best way to use the crude utensils available in those days. The pupils were taught how to skin small animals for the hides, how to cure them for furs to provide warm clothing, and how to tan them into leather for summer clothes. They learned to cut and pattern their garments, as well as the art of adding shells and beads to them for decorations. They learned the secrets of vegetable dyes from which to create bright colors for their garments. The boys soon learned to make bows and arrows for war, hunting spears for fishing, and traps for animals. They were trained to be warriors and taught the science of war. They worked in "the planting ground" and found out how to use the few tools available. In short, the lads were taught domestic and other sciences of that era. So, by day the Long House was the center of activity where the young Wecks were taught how to become good squaws and worthy braves. It must have been an excellent school, for, through

many years, the Weckquaeskecks were important factors in the Indian world.

But the dawn of a new world era arrived when the white man discovered this Indian paradise. The red man soon learned that he had very little in common with the white man and his world. It was easy to decide that his own world and civilization suited him best. The Indian saw nothing, either in the attitude of the early white explorers or in the white settlers in his later dealings with them, that attracted him; and he did not care for either their customs or their habits. With sad and heavy hearts, but with firm determination, the original red-skinned Aquehungians finally closed their Aquehung school, left their ancient homes, beautiful village, paradise world, to look for new lands far removed from the white man's domain.

The development of the white man's sphere was slow after the departure of the Indians, for only a few hardy pioneers followed them into the isolated area to rent the wooded land that first had to be cleared of trees before it could be farmed. In due time a few families rented land from Frederick Philipse and settled on scattered farms in the Aquehung area. These tenant farmers, like the Indians before them, soon felt the need of a school for the education of their children.

Somewhere around 1752, when the area was yet an English manor, the successor to the Indian Aquehung school was built on the old Smith farm a mile farther north, at a location more convenient for the regional farmers. This Tuckaho Hills school was necessarily small, as there were less than twenty families in the school district. It was, however, history-making, for apparently it was the first white man's school in the old English manor. According to the old map of 1785 there were only two schools in the wide area now Yonkers, the other being south of the old Philipsburgh. There is no record showing which was the older, for Philipse failed to keep such data. At that time, however, the Aquehung regional population was three times larger than that of

the Philipsburgh area; so it seems logical to assume that the larger community built the first school.

This original one-room schoolhouse, which was on what is now Underhill Street, became the center of attraction for a wide section. It was a public gathering place for discussion of the problems of the day. It was the place where children of all ages were given the rudiments of an education. Textbooks were scarce and not easily obtained, most of them coming from England. The school building was rough but sturdily built of hand-hewn timbers and split boards. Equipped with benches, it lacked the convenience of handmade desks and the luxury of beaver skins. But it served its purpose, for the young pioneers had a keen desire for knowledge and were little concerned about the luxury either of desks or beaver skins. Judging from the number of farms then in the area, it would appear that there were some twenty-five to fifty children attending this pioneer school. The number varied considerably from year to year with the changing ownership of farms.

The Tuckaho Hills school not only became famous but, at the time, served the community well. It continued to do so for about one hundred years until its successor, School Number Five, was built. The Township of Yonkers was decreed in 1788, and plans soon were drawn to erect more schools despite the then small, widely scattered population. It was decided to number the schools, and in due time the first township school was constructed.

Number One was erected in 1800 at Saw Mill River Road and Tuckahoe Road.

Number Two was built in 1833 at Albany Post Road and Ashburton Avenue.

Number Three was originally built about 1860 at Mosholu before that section became part of New York City, but later it was built on Hamilton Avenue—about 1884.

Number Four was constructed on Mile Square Road and Trenchard Street in 1862.

Number Five was constructed of wood in the Aquehung com-

munity on the old road, now Central Park Avenue, and Underhill Street. The exact date is unknown, but was evidently about 1862, since Schools Number Four and Number Six were erected in 1862. School Number Five was a forerunner of School Number Eight, for, thirty years later, after faithfully serving its purpose, it was abandoned in favor of School Number Eight.

Number Six was established in 1862 on Warburton Avenue and Ashburton Avenue.

Number Seven was built at Walnut and Garfield Streets in 1887.

Number Eight was erected in 1892 on Bronxville Road in the Aquehung community as a two-room school, taking the place of School Number Five. The area around it was growing rapidly after the coming of the railroad.

The two-room structure was the forerunner of the present brick building housing the school. Miss Anne Palmer, a member of the family for whom Palmer Road was named, was one of the original two teachers, and she headed the faculty until 1907. The building has been enlarged several times. About 830 pupils were enrolled at the beginning of the 1949–50 school year, of whom about 120 were in the kindergarten class.

Many years elapsed between the construction prior to 1785 of the first two private schools and the erection of School Number One—at least twenty-five to fifty years. Thirty-three more years went by before Number Two was built; and twenty-seven years passed before Number Three was used. As noted earlier, however, the population of Yonkers was about 1200 in the year 1800, when it was thinly spread over 17½ square miles. The figure had not increased much by 1833 when Number Two School was built. By 1865 the population of Yonkers was 12,000 and School Numbers Three, Four, and Five had been built. In 1892, when School Number Eight was erected, the population had increased to more than 32,000. For easy reference all the public schools of Yonkers have been tabulated on one page, with the dates they were built and the number of pupils enrolled for the 1949–50 school year.

| School | Present Building Constructed | Location | Pupils (1949) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1872 | Saw Mill River Road | 101 |
| 3 | 1884 | Hamilton Avenue | 483 |
| 4 | 1885 | Trenchard Street | 713 |
| 5 | 1908 | Lockwood Avenue | 782 |
| 6 | 1897 | Ashburton Avenue | 354 |
| 7 | 1887 | Walnut Street | 449 |
| Yonkers H.S. | 1890 | Linden Street | 524 |
| 8 | 1892 | Bronxville Road | 833 |
| 9 | 1894 | Fairview Street | 455 |
| 11 | 1898 | Wakefield Avenue | 386 |
| 12 | 1898 | Ashburton Avenue | 391 |
| 13 | 1900 | McLean Avenue | 749 |
| 14 | 1902 | Crescent Place | 572 |
| 15 | 1902 | Manhattan Avenue | 478 |
| 16 | 1902 | North Broadway | 573 |
| 17 | 1903 | Midland Avenue | 380 |
| 18 | 1904 | Park Hill Avenue | 666 |
| 19 | 1906 | Jackson Street | 676 |
| Saunders T.S. | 1911 | South Broadway | 490 |
| Longfellow J.H.S. | 1914 | Seymour Street (Old No. 20) | 736 |
| 21 | 1914 | Lee Avenue | 675 |
| 22 | 1914 | Nepperhan Avenue | 260 |
| 23 | 1918 | Van Cortlandt Park Avenue | 506 |
| Gorton H.S. | 1924 | Shonnard Place | 978 |
| Roosevelt H.S. | 1925 | Tuckahoe Road | 1222 |
| Hawthorne H.S. | 1925 | Hawthorne Avenue | 860 |
| H.S. of Commerce | 1930 | North Broadway | 1127 |
| 24 | 1930 | Parson Street | 302 |
| 25 | 1930 | Warburton Avenue | 294 |
| 26 | 1936 | Woodford Road | 156 |
| 27 | 1930 | Valentine Lane | 317 |
| Mark Twain J.H.S. | 1898 | Wakefield Avenue | 486 |
| Franklin Jr. H.S. | 1891 | Waverly Street (Old No. 2) | 705 |
| | | | 18,679 |

No. 10 building was sold.

But to return to School Number Eight. Its long history, including a legend, began probably a thousand years ago as the Aquehung Long House school where the youngsters were taught the fine art of being good Indians. In the role of the first school in the English manor, and the first school on American soil within the old Yonkers boundaries, the Tuckaho Hills school made history while training young pioneers for a new era and young Americans for a free

country. It also created a more interesting background for School Number Eight. School Number Five carried on the old tradition, and now School Number Eight is serving the community well. In these ancient traditions Roosevelt High School, School Fifteen, and School Twenty-six also can share, for they too are located in the wider area formerly covered by the earlier schools even though built at a later date than Number Eight. There is enough glory associated with the distant past for all to bask in its radiance.

Yonkers has an excellent school system—progressive, alert, and expanding. It is staffed with experienced educators, including a corps of teachers the equal of any. School Number Eight is typical of the fine work being carried on to train young Yonkersonians through the various grades. It is turning out splendid Americans, good Yonkersonians, and fine Aquehungians, just as the old Aquehung school graduated good Indians and the Tuckaho Hills school educated the patriots who helped to free and then to build this American nation.

School Number Eight has a kindergarten class of about 120 children in the five-year-old range. In the course of daily routine it deals with many subjects designed to give active employment to inquiring minds and small hands and legs. Basic programs are planned and approved by school officials to keep juvenile energies usefully directed into various channels. Recently these children and their teachers and parents have had some adventures, exploring truck farms to select pumpkins and vegetables from the vine to begin at the "root" of the food supply, just as the Indians did long ago. At last reports small busy hands were peeling carrots and potatoes, shelling peas, slicing cabbage, and in general having a great time preparing vegetable soup. They were sure it would be better than any at home even though never finished.

However, in another month the "kinder" may be launched on a different program, depending, as the teachers say, "on

the wishes of the children." But just what spirit moves these five-year-olds to decide collectively what program they wish to follow seems one of the mysteries hidden behind the veil of modern teaching methods, which are somewhat vague to those of the "old school" who were peremptorily told what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and of dire results to follow. Possibly behind the veil lurk the spirits of the Indian children encouraging them on, even whispering in their ears that the next program should be vegetable soup or the promotion of a circus. But, whatever the young modernists do, they seem to do it well, thus bringing credit not only to the system but also to the teachers and to the pupils.

This kindergarten class and its activities are important factors in the community, for in the kindergarten begins the training of these youngsters, the results of which will later determine their aptitude and ability to progress through the later advanced educational years. It was in this kindergarten class that an idea was born about six years ago. The topic was old but its design was new. It was an idea rich in possibilities, exciting in its application, and creative in design. It fitted well into the community, and having been nurtured in this atmosphere it has grown into an active force while exerting wide influence on the lives of its people. For several years, beginning with the school year 1944–45, the community has had a fully developed Kindergarten Circus, partly because of local background, but mainly because it had been both evolved and expanded under capable guiding hands. It already has made the school and community famous and, if continued, seems destined in its promised future to exercise a genuine influence, not only in this but in other communities that may be inclined to follow its example and adopt its plans. It is unfortunate that the circus could not have been held in 1948–49 owing to a lack of space, the influx of many new pupils, and the incompletion of the new addition to the building; but it is hoped that ways and means can be found to continue it in future years.

In developing this unique community circus more than one hundred youngsters of the kindergarten class were put through daily rehearsals to prepare them for the grand finale staged in the spring. Under careful direction the children put on a full-dress circus so cleverly performed that it not only sold out the seating capacity of the house, but standing room as well. Amateur circuses have been staged before, but under this plan the youngsters were in full circus costume, were well trained, and were so engrossed in their work as to make their performance assume a professional air.

The class was fortunate in receiving as a donation from one of the parents the beautiful materials required for the costumes. This generous gesture, in turn, inspired other parents to design and prepare them. The children seemed actually to live their parts day by day, while their parents became so interested that they joined wholeheartedly in the plans to organize the necessary mechanics of the show. Here was found complete understanding between children, parents, and teachers, and all in an atmosphere making for progress and success. Several committees composed of parents performed yeoman work in helping to carry out the program, not only in its preparation, but in rehearsals and even to the final performance.

But it is necessary to turn back the pages of history for a moment and delve into the historical beginning and background of the circus if the clue is to be found to the amazing power developed within this program. While it may be only a legend, still it seems probable that the first circus was developed by the Indians in the prehistoric red man's world. There is no apparent record of this unusual type of entertainment staged in early Biblical days.

In later centuries the Romans developed races or circuses for the amusement of the crowds, some featuring cruelty toward captives; but those events had neither the same foundation, incentive, nor purpose of either the ancient Indian or the modern circus. The Roman chariot races evi-

dently were intended to create competition within the ranks of military forces, somewhat along the lines of the present great United States Army and Navy games. It was necessary to give Roman armies something to occupy them in peacetime. But these contests of skill and strength sometimes developed into deadly combat between rival gladiators. Eventually their Roman games deteriorated into cruel and inhuman frays. Thousands of innocent captives were forced to fight each other in mortal combat, or in unequal combat with Roman soldiers.

Finally the demand for seats became so great that huge amphitheaters were built with dens concealed beneath them. From the gates of these dens were released lions and tigers to attack innocent people—slaves and captives. Many early Christians underwent such martyrdom.

Thus, it can be seen the so-called Roman circus did not deserve its name nor should it be compared, except in bold contrast, with the Indian or American circus. While the Roman circus used mortal combat and murder as the basis of its appeal, the modern circus employs instead skill, daring, and outstanding performances. While the Romans used animals mainly to slaughter helpless people in order to give a bloodthirsty crowd a taste of the thrill of the jungle, the great circus of today uses tame and wild animals for exhibition purposes and for trained acts. This amuses the public, which appreciates the value of human lives, be they "ever so humble."

When the white man first discovered the red man's world, he found that certain forms of weird religious celebrations expressed the basic philosophies of the Indian life and civilization. The celebration of Busk, the major harvest festival, became, in effect, a great circus staged in the attempt to put on a show not only as a thank offering to their gods for a bountiful harvest, but as entertainment for the members of the tribe. So, in the beginning, the circus stage was set up as a training and educational program. To the Indian

braves it was an opportunity to relax from and forget their daily tasks of growing crops, hunting, fishing, and fighting while enjoying the colorful display of their native histrionic talent.

An interesting study of human nature and psychology develops by probing deep into the Indian ideas and motives. The idea of the circus clown with painted face and odd costume originated with the red race thousands of years ago. There is a legend of an Indian brave, frivolous in disposition, who sat on the bank of a stream and decorated his face and body with mud of different shades that he might put on a show for the amusement of his tribe. One likes to think he was a Weckquaeskeck brave seated on the shore of the Ahquahung River in the Aquehung community. He must have been a good actor who made such a hit that others quickly caught the idea and competition developed. Animal skins and colored feathers soon were added and odd grotesque figures competed for the plaudits of the tribe. Eventually these bright colors, fancy dress, painted bodies, and disguised faces were used by the actors for dances and parades.

In the years that followed, a day came when the Weckquaeskeck tribe was attacked by its enemy, the Mohawks to the north, during one of these ancient celebrations in the Aquehung Bowl. To the amazement of the attackers they found themselves fighting with grotesque figures instead of the red men they expected to encounter. In their startled surprise the Mohawks were easily beaten off. This battle may have been fought around Armour Villa Hill and the village which in the long ago covered the grounds of School Number Eight, the home of the Kindergarten Circus. The victorious Weckquaeskecks, realizing the shock they had given the enemy, increased their efforts toward developing brighter and weirder costumes until eventually their circus dress became their battle attire. The idea spread through-

out the red man's world until all were using war paint and feathers.

One might think back a thousand years and muse over those Busk celebrations, with the many circus features they presented. The contests of skill and strength between the Indian braves were the forerunners of the present-day "Big Top" performances. The Indians were adept at feats of daring, and their imitation of monkeys in the high trees would make lively competition for the trapeze artists and acrobats of today. Indian war dancers were lithe and graceful and their costumes unique and colorful. When hundreds participated, the stage was set for an extravaganza which would command attention in both the red man's and the white man's world.

The Indian circus was held in a great outdoor "tent" with the sky as the roof, the sun as the spotlight, and tall trees of the forests as the walls, while the floor was carpeted with pine needles and leaves instead of sawdust. The ring was the open space under the trees, and the side shows were housed in the tepees. Where could one find a more magnificent setting for a circus than a great al fresco arena? If those Indians could reenact today their performances in the Aquehung Bowl, they would amaze the community. And while their daylight show would be grandiose, a moonlight performance to the accompaniment of campfires, curling smoke in the shadows of the trees, and gaily painted figures dancing in and around the glowing fires—well! it would be a breath-taking spectacle.

It is with this heritage of thousands of years of the Indian circus in mind, this background of painted faces, feathered headdress, animal skins, gay costumes, war dances, tepees, and campfires in the broad open spaces with the world as its tent, that one can consider the huge American circus of today.

There was a long interval of time between the Indian cir-

cus and the start of the white man's circus in the United States. The first American circus had its beginning not far from Yonkers, in northeastern Westchester County in 1815—about 135 years ago. The story begins with an American ship captain who was in London and bought an elephant at an auction for $20.00. The pachyderm, named "Old Bet," was brought to New York and sold to Heakaliah Bailey, who finally took her to northeastern Westchester. There daily exhibitions were given in barns or in any other convenient place. Finally a tent was obtained and the first show began to travel around. It made money, and in a short time others began to organize additional shows. Eventually there were a number of these small "rolling shows" traveling around the country, most of which began in the area around Somers and Brewster.

One of these organizations was joined by G. T. Bailey and P. T. Barnum. In 1853 Barnum's famous American Museum and Menagerie was operating in New York City. In a few years the Ringling Brothers Circus was organized, as well as the Barnum and Bailey Circus, and both circuses toured the country for a long period, until finally combined into one "Greatest Show on Earth." These circuses in the beginning were almost exclusively animal exhibitions, for people were curious to see strange wild beasts.

In 1823 a red brick hotel was built at Somers, New York. It was named "The Elephant Hotel," and when Old Bet died, Bailey, her original owner and also proprietor of the hotel, erected in her memory, in front of the hostelry, a granite monument topped by a wooden elephant. In 1849 a Grand Ball was held in this hotel. Many circus families assembled for the occasion. The comments at the time dealt with the great wealth of the circus owners congregated there.

Worthy of mention is that fact that the white man's circus began as an exhibition of animals and the Indian circus started as an exhibition of the skill of humans, and eventu-

ally these two basic attractions were combined to form the Big Top of today.

It is not surprising that the circus holds keen interest for both young and old alike, nor that it has become a major part of the amusement program of American life. But it took the Ringling Brothers' genius to perfect the idea and transform it into the "Greatest Show on Earth." The Indians of a thousand years ago would be amazed at the modern development of this invention, and Old Bet would find it difficult to follow the pachyderm capers of today.

It took the kindergarten class of Yonkers School Number Eight, under the leadership of an unusual teacher, to bring the circus idea to full bloom and to capitalize on its advantages as a training program for its five-year-olds. Rhythms, songs, music, and dancing are natural expressions of all children. The circus incorporates all these expressions and teaches the children how to perform individually, collectively, and as a cooperative program presentation for their parents. It should not appear unusual to find the young Aquehungians taking readily to the circus and giving such splendid performances. They are imbibing the atmosphere of the ancient Indian villagers whose "spirits" may be hovering over them, offering encouragement for their every Thespian move.

Amateur circuses have been promoted in various schools and in all grades, but some of them have not been organized to use the varied talents of the parents and, as a result, have not always been well costumed; thus they sometimes have lacked the professional touch. Kindergarten Eight, however, has programmed a complete show in full costume, something unusual for youngsters of tender age.

A circus is not merely a "show" as that word is sometimes loosely used. It is an idea, a plan, a program put together with immense effort, requiring training, skill, art, teaching, imitating, mimicry, acting, costuming, coordination, and cooperation. The success of a circus depends on the genius

and skill that combine these factors. That is the underlying reason why the circus has proved so valuable to the impressionable youngsters, who act their individual roles in their inimitable manner and with a degree of naturalness that fails many experienced actors. The training, participation, and final show seem to present one of the best plans yet discovered for a complete child-training course. It gives the children self-confidence when they realize their ability to function in the circus. The foundation is thus laid for their rapid progress in school.

It is easy to understand the powerful influence the children's circus has had on the Aquehung community when one realizes that there are perhaps two hundred fathers and mothers interested annually in its program and actively cooperating day by day. Step by step they follow their youngsters through their daily routine until they emerge months later as trained actors and actresses for the final show. And when it is remembered that additional parents join in this work and cooperate with the program year by year, one can readily appreciate that it does not take long for the idea to permeate the entire community. It builds solidly for the future.

Parents participating in this circus-training program acquire a better understanding of their children, teachers, school problems, and even themselves. When listening to some of the parents talk, one sees that they have taken a new lease on life, entered into the spirit of the occasion, found new interests and new friends, and been greatly benefited by the circus and its associations. They have studied their own children more carefully and compared them in competition with others. So the kindergarten circus parade should march annually across the community stage with ever increasing importance.

Aquehung is proud of its School Eight and Yonkers can be justly proud of each one of its schools. Yonkers is fortunate in having in the various classes of its schools so many

loyal and patriotic teachers who realize the importance of their work of training young Americans for the future. That is no easy task under present-day conditions, when there are so many attractions to divert the children's attention. These teachers merit the respect, sympathy, cooperation, and thanks of everyone.

It is inspiring to find an idea and plan like this Kindergarten Circus carrying out a training program that teaches the children better to understand the real meaning of school. The circus and school can pay large dividends to the community. But whether the kindergarteners are making vegetable soup or playing circus, they are following in the footsteps of the Indian children taught centuries ago to make Aquehung sapsis, a form of vegetable soup. In the autumn they too participated in the great harvest celebration of Busk, having their own celebration, a counterpart of the present Kindergarten Circus. So "Time marches on!" What was old becomes new; what is new was once old.

It would harmonize with the community's historic background and traditions to designate School Number Eight as the "Aquehung School," and the Kindergarten Circus, with its ancient Indian heritage, as the "Aquehung Kindergarten Circus."

The time may come for an Indian celebration of Busk with the children appearing in full costume for participation in it. The year 1951 might well be the 2000th anniversary of the founding of the old Indian village of Aquehung.

## The American's Creed

I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

Written by William Tyler Page in 1917 and accepted by the House of Representatives for the American People on April 3, 1918.

# 18

## Where Are We Going?

WHO is the young lady of today and who will she be tomorrow? Is she the teen-ager who "definitely must" act older; the mother of forty years who dresses like her daughter; the grandmother of sixty who dresses like forty; or the great-grandmother of eighty with curls and a twinkle? It is difficult to classify these moderns because age per se does not establish their proper classification. It is wiser, perhaps, to let them classify themselves. From time immemorial age has sought age, and even currently those possessing the same life span and experiences find particular pleasure and satisfaction in association with persons of their own generation.

There are in every community many grand elderly persons who have mellowed with age while giving of their time and efforts toward the building of a better community. They are the great-grandparents of the community, possibly the grandparents or elder statesmen and progressive women who should be encouraged to continue their community activities. They are not of the oldsters' class of yesteryear, who considered it stylish to wax aged, sit in the corner, and commune with the past. They are interested in the world and its affairs.

Every present-day community needs a Grand Age Club. It would provide opportunity for these persons of long experience to continue to take an active interest in community affairs. It would permit them to be of service to each other when in need of friends or when they crave the association

of those of their own generation, at least for the part of the time when "grands" and "great grands" cause commotions at home, or when, in some circumstances, they "feel in the way." A Grand Age Club could hold regular meetings and present enjoyable programs. Members could reminisce with songs or discuss the issues of the day. These men and women of ripe experience and years have managed things before and could still capably handle their own affairs with the aid of a club and a workable plan. A Grand Age Club could offer many blessings to the ill and the shut-ins. Its members not only could visit them, but could arrange home programs to interest and entertain them. Of more importance, it would impress upon the useful advanced-agers the fact that they still have many loyal friends who consider them a vital part of the community.

The census reports show that there are more than ten million people over sixty-five years of age in the United States, and it is estimated that soon there will be twenty million, medical and other sciences having discovered new methods of increasing the human life span. Every community needs the benefits to be derived from the long experiences of its elder citizens, whom everyone likes to see happy. The meetings of a Grand Age Club might become so interesting that its doors would have to be locked against the curious younger generation; but one could feel certain that the answer to any problem solved behind closed doors would be correct. With such a club the grand elderly folks could brighten their own lives, those of others, and the whole spirit of the community.

There is another group in every community, best described by one mother who said she had spent her early years preparing herself for the future, her middle age in raising and educating a family, and now—the children being married—she concluded there was a new world ahead for those who would explore it; so she decided to give herself a "coming out" party. Engraved invitations were sent to all her friends to come and help her celebrate. From then

on, she declared, she was going to do some of the things she had always wanted to do and give more time to friends and the community. More "coming out" parties will create an active force for good in the community. The idea is certainly worth while.

For persons in the community between school age and the Grand Age era—the active middle-age group—there is much work to be done to carry on where the elders have left off and to prepare the way for the school age to follow.

In the past "what affected the Hudson interested the Ahquahung," and overland from "shore to shore" there was a common bond of interest. Today our areas of interest have expanded from "ocean to ocean" and, as a result of two World Wars and changing conditions, we find ourselves enmeshed in the problems existing between new shores, and our "area of interest" has expanded from the Atlantic to the Indian, to the Pacific, and back to the Atlantic. That certainly is reaching out far afield from our Ahquahung-Hudson shores into areas about which we know very little. We find strange winds blowing in our faces, strange lands we are not acquainted with, and new theories that seem to float on the breeze. We find ourselves entangled with the brambles in one direction and avoiding unseen bogs in another.

Whether we live on the banks of the Ahquahung, the Hudson, the Mississippi, or any of the many beautiful streams of our country, we all have common ideals based on our love of these streams, our homes, our towns, our states, and our nation. We prize freedom and democracy—the kind we know and understand, the kind our forefathers and we developed in this great land of ours, the kind that respects the rights of individuals and permits us to live under a government of our own choosing. We feel strongly about these ideals, for we have fought wars to preserve our rights and our liberty and to help others preserve theirs. We have felt that this country belonged to us, that we could be proud of it, that our form of government worked.

But today we hear talk of other forms of government and

proposals that our form be changed. We hear of people with alien sympathies boring within our government. We hear that our schools and churches are honeycombed with individuals teaching false doctrines. We hear of organizations with high-sounding names and patriotic titles trying to mislead us. All this disturbs our thinking, and in the confusion it is difficult to know with whom and with what we are dealing. What does it all mean and what are we going to do about it? Can it be that some of us are slipping behind "our time" or is the world moving along faster than we can follow it? Does this country really belong to us or are we gradually turning it over to those holding new theories, new "isms," and new doctrines? Are we in danger of losing our American heritage from lack of thinking and lack of action? It is time for good Americans to find out what they really think. Are our ideas and ideals the same as those of our forefathers? Does progress in science, industry, and agriculture change our method of living to such an extent that our principles are changing? Can we have progress and still remain rooted in the fundamentals we were taught? We have succeeded beyond all our dreams thus far.

It is time to pause and reorient ourselves before it is too late. It is time to visit a few of our historical shrines and there imbibe some of the spiritual and moral atmosphere of the past. It is well to review our record and history to determine whether we are following a trail into the backwoods, as the Indians of old did, by relegating to the State certain functions that are the responsibility of the individual American citizen, or whether we are heading down a broad highway to our true destiny—the highway we would choose for our great democratic nation to follow.

We shall find that our roots are still growing in the old soil we have loved for years. Our thinking will become clearer as we rededicate ourselves to our glorious past. We shall begin to wonder if we are facing the dawn of a new era or whether our country is being imposed on. We shall conclude that it is time to find out the meaning of all the

noise and fuss. We shall want to bring the alien ideas, "isms," and ideologies out into the open so that we can look at them and find out who is promoting them and why. It is possible that, in our earnest desire for individual rights and free speech, we have gone too far in permitting agitators to disturb us and our country. We cannot permit an abuse of this sacrosanct privilege to cause dissension among us.

Our Republic, under its form of government, is a long way ahead of most nations on the road to a better world. We want to stay on that road and be sure that no road blocks or false signs lead us off the right highway. We want progress that creates a better place in which to live.

If our country belongs to us, we have the right to live here in peace and the right to refuse the privilege of living here to those having no intention of adopting our ideas of democracy. We owe some obligation in this respect not only to ourselves and to future generations, but to the memory of our dead, to those who labored to build up our country to its present greatness, and to those who made the supreme sacrifice in wars to preserve this American Republic. In these circumstances it is amazing to see small minority cliques, in the guise of legitimate organizations, becoming pressure groups to force our government to take action favorable to them. Our country was not made great by so false an approach to its liberal form of government.

In our Republic the citizen is supreme and the majority must rule; so, if our form of democracy is to continue, every individual must do his or her part to make democracy work. We should not delegate that peculiar right to anyone or to any group. There should be no conflict in our loyalty to our God, our country, our states, our towns, our homes, our people; or in our loyalty to our churches, our schools, our associations, our work, our play, or our ideals. Each phase of true loyalty has a place in our daily living. Loyalty per se is not subject to division. It is neither static nor phlegmatic. Loyalty is *alive*.

Loyalty to our God and to our country must come first if

we are to have a real democracy and a better world to live in. We must be loyal to our friends and neighbors if we are to increase the pleasure of living. There should be no conflict between these and our other loyalties.

Our democracy will work better when every citizen votes and when every voter is a property owner. More voters will then want to know how tax money is spent; we shall have less indirect tax, less politics, less communistic and socialistic ideologies and propaganda, and a better country. And we shall have better families, better individuals, and consequently better communities.

We shall remain successful as a united nation only so long as we are honest with ourselves and the world. In that way only can we hold international respect and retain our own self-respect. We must be fair to those with whom we deal and cooperative, sympathetic, and friendly as a people and a nation; and we can be as long as we believe in God, in ourselves, and in our ideals.

It is important that we raise our young Americans in the proper atmosphere and with the best mental perspective. We should indoctrinate them in our American ideals, in fundamental American principles, and start them off with "both feet on the ground." After that we need not concern ourselves about "isms" boring from within or new ideologies taking over our country. American youth must be taught individual rights and responsibilities and the importance of community life. The kindergarten with its circus, mentioned in the preceding chapter, is a good beginning. A study made in each school grade of our historic past and current points of interest would be a good follow-up. Our Sunday schools and churches also have a real job to perform.

It is time to rededicate ourselves, not merely to our impressive past, but to a program that will build a strong and more livable democracy. In planning such a program we can recall that democracy is something neither inherited nor handed down. Democracy is a way of life created by the

people themselves in a friendly atmosphere that respects the rights of others. It is something created day by day by each individual person, and collectively by the whole people. Democracy cannot be appropriated as a material object but must be earned and developed by each individual as he or she exercises his or her own imagination, sense of right and justice, objectives of fairness, and a desire to live in a way that life may become more individually and collectively livable.

Through adhering to a constructive program one creates and re-creates a democracy while creating and re-creating one's own democratic ideals. Democracy is only as free and strong as the people choose to make it, but is never achieved by the use of force either against individuals or groups or by individuals or groups against others or against their government. Democracy is vigorous and healthy; it cannot be idle or wasteful either in time or energy, or narrow in its approach to the problems of the day. Those living under the oppression and suppression of autocratic regimes, who are told what they can or cannot do, have neither the incentive nor the desire to progress in the world, as history has clearly proved. Thus, in the present world-wide struggle it is well to remember that Democracy is the strongest single human force on earth. Individuals free in mind and body can think things through clearly and, after deciding what is best, are ready to put their hearts and souls into any efforts, whether they be the building of a better world or defending their homes and country.

It is most important that within the idealistic framework of our Republic Americans decline to give encouragement, aid, or comfort to subversive groups or blocs which, under any pretext, attempt to use despotic measures or force to gain their ends in our midst. Whether mistakenly led, or arbitrarily attempting to gain their points, these groups must be made to realize the eternal truth that Democracy lives and breathes for all and not merely for the few.

In the days ahead Yonkersonians, together with other Americans, will face new issues, new problems, and puzzling decisions. It would be well for all to read the American's Creed, which faces the opening page of this chapter, and to memorize it and repeat it over and over.

It would be a fitting act for public speakers to open their meetings with this creed. Some political speakers, however, might have difficulty making their arguments "ring true" after the reading of this simple, inspiring patriotic formula.

If Americans are to follow these precepts, it is important to increase the activities of family groups and community life. Democratic ideals must be created and nurtured in a home atmosphere wherein the right and friendships of neighbors and others are respected and treasured. It is high time to break up concentrated and pressure government and to bring more of our government and what it represents back to the communities, where it will be under the watchful eye of the people.

And now as this story is brought to a conclusion it seems appropriate to repeat here that if one is interested in history, legends, landscape, topography, geology, zoölogy, botany, food, weather, trees, homes, gardens, trails, streets, roads, highways, parks, lakes, rivers, churches, schools, associations, he can find them all in Yonkers and its several communities, wrapped in an attractive package containing the atmosphere and charm of "ye-olde Younckers."

It is a pleasure to remember the sterling people dwelling within its borders, their many deeds of kindness, friendliness, and active interest in community life. It seems appropriate to close this account of a grand community, of the several communities and of the larger community of which they are a part, with the expressive words of an unknown author:

> "The grandest melodies ever played are the kind deeds done by one to another, and the sweetest music ever heard is that which is played by the hands of loving kindness upon the keyboard of the human heart."

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